

AGENDA PAPERS

NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

**Notice is Hereby Given that a Meeting of the Council of Auckland
University of Technology will be held:**

**Council Room, Level 7, WA Building
AUT City Campus**

On: Monday, 8 December 2025

FROM: 2.30 – 5.30 PM

**Andrea Vujnovich
COUNCIL SECRETARY**



AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

Chancellor

Rob Campbell
Appointed by Council

Pro-Chancellor

Marama Royal
Appointed by Council

Members

Professor Damon Salesa
Vice-Chancellor of the Auckland University of Technology

Peter Treacy
Appointed by the Minister

Janine Smith
Appointed by the Minister

Shaun Clarke
Appointed by the Minister

Mark Darrow
Appointed by the Minister

Alicia Lemmer
Appointed by the Auckland University of Technology Student Association

Leo Foliaki
Appointed by Council

Michelle Huang
Appointed by Council

Welby Ings
Elected by the Academic Staff of the Auckland University of Technology

Lani Thomson
Elected by the Professional Staff of the Auckland University of Technology

Karakia

Beginning and closing	
<p>Tuia ki te rangi Dedicated to the sky</p> <p>Tuia ki te whenua and to the earth below</p> <p>Tuia ki te human kind are bound</p> <p>Ira tangata and inseperable</p> <p>Ka rongo te pō From the infinite potential</p> <p>Ka rongo te ao to the realization in light</p> <p>Tūturu whakamaua Let us come together</p> <p>Kia tīna with purpose</p> <p>Haumi e Hui e united and ready</p> <p>Tāiki e to progress</p>	<p>Kia tau iho Let the strength</p> <p>Te tauwhirotanga and serenity</p> <p>O te wāhi ngaro of our ancestors</p> <p>E pai ai te nohotahi guide us as we gather</p> <p>Ā tinana, wairua hoki in body and spirit</p> <p>Whakauenuku ake Holdfast to</p> <p>Te āio mō te katoa Peace for all</p> <p>Kia whakamaua kia tīna let it be realised</p> <p>Hui e Tāiki e for us all</p>
Closing	
<p>Unuhia, unuhia Draw on, draw on</p> <p>Unuhia ki te uru tapu nui Draw on the supreme sacredness</p>	<p>Kia tau kia tātou katoa May peace, love, and safety</p> <p>Te āio, te aroha me te marutau Be upon us all</p>

<p>Kia wātea, kia māmā, te ngākau, te tinana, te wairua i te ara takatā To clear, to free the heart, the body and the spirit of mankind</p> <p>Koia rā e Rongo, whakairia ake ki runga Rongo, suspended high above us</p> <p>Kia tina! Tina! Hui e! Tāiki e! Draw together! Affirm!</p>	<p>Thei mauri ora a promise of a glorious day</p>
---	---

PART A

OPEN AGENDA



COUNCIL PART A OPEN AGENDA

Council Agenda Part A (Open Agenda)

Monday 8 December 2025 from 2.30 pm to be held in the Council Room, WA710, Auckland, AUT City Campus

Karakia		
Mihi – Chancellor		
1. Welcome, Apologies and approval of agenda	The Chancellor moves that apologies be noted and that Council approve the assignment of agenda items to Part A and Part B of the Council agenda.	
2. Declaration/Recording of any Interests	2. The attention of Members is drawn to the Conflicts of Interest Policy and the need to disclose any interest in an item on the agenda of the meeting as set out in Schedule 11, Clause 8 of the Education and Training Act 2020.	The Chancellor moves that the declarations if any be noted and the action taken be endorsed .
3. Constitutional Matters, Conferment of Degrees, and Policy	3.1 No papers 3.2 Adopt Charter of Academic Freedom and Statement on Political Neutrality 3.3 Call for Nominations and Expressions of Interest	The Chancellor moves that the following be approved: • See item 3.2 The Chancellor moves that the following be approved: See item 3.3
4. Council Meetings	4.1 Council Meeting Draft Minutes Part A, 29 September 2025. 4.2 Matters arising from the Minutes Part A of the Council Meeting, 29 September 2025 not elsewhere on the agenda.	The Chancellor moves that the Minutes Part A of the Council Meeting held on 29 September 2025 and be taken as read and confirmed . Council note the status of the matters arising.
5. Vice-Chancellor's Report	5. Vice-Chancellor's Report	The Chancellor moves that the Vice-Chancellor's Report be received .
6. Chancellor's Report	6. Chancellor's Report	The Chancellor moves that the Chancellor's Report be received .

7. Reports from Boards, Committees and Working Groups to Council	7. Reports and Minutes from the Academic Board, 29 September and 24 November 2025.	The Chancellor moves that Reports and Minutes from the Academic Board , 29 September and 24 November 2025 be received .
8. Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Report	8. Health, Safety & Wellbeing Report for September – November 2025	The Chancellor moves that the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report for September - November 2025 be received .
9. Te Tiriti	9. Report from Te Toi Aronui	The Chancellor moves that the Report from Te Toi Aronui Professor Meihana Durie be received .
10. Strategic Reports	10. No report	
11. Student Success	11. No report	
12. Correspondence referred by the Chancellor	12. No correspondence	
13. Other matters arising for decision or noting	<p>13.1 Update from the President of AUTSA.</p> <p>13.2 Update from the Council Member elected by the Academic Staff of the Auckland University of Technology</p> <p>13.3 Update from the Council Member elected by the Professional Staff of the Auckland University of Technology</p> <p>13.4 Sustainability Update – International Students’ Air Travel Emissions</p>	<p>The Chancellor moves that the Update from AUTSA be received.</p> <p>The Chancellor moves that the Update from the Council member Elected by the Academic Staff of the Auckland University of Technology be received.</p> <p>The Chancellor moves that the Update from the Council member Elected by the Professional Staff of the Auckland University of Technology be received.</p> <p>The Chancellor moves that the Sustainability Update from Lucy McKenzie, Head of Sustainability, Strategy & Planning be received.</p>
14. Items moved from Part B of the agenda to Part A and General Business		

PUBLIC EXCLUSIONS

The Chancellor moved that the public be now excluded from Part B of this meeting, and that the following matters be discussed without public disclosure. This resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and section 9 of the Official Information Act, as the case may require, which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting AND THAT W Lawson, L Williams, A Vujnovich and R Nottingham be permitted to remain at this meeting, after the public has been excluded, because of their knowledge of the matters to be discussed in the proceedings while the public are excluded. This knowledge, which will be of assistance in relation to the matters to be discussed, is relevant to these matters because they relate to aspects of the administration of AUT for which those persons are responsible.

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter. The public conduct of each item below would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 9 of the OIA identified below.	Ground(s) under section 48(1) LGOIMA for the passing of this resolution
15. Council Meeting Part B of the meeting held on 29 September 2025	s 9(2)(b)(ii), s 9(2)(i), 9(2)(k)	7(2)(f)(i), 7(2)(h), 7(2)(i), 7(2)(j)
16. Vice Chancellor's Report	s 9(2)(a), 9(2)(b)(ii), s 9(2)(i), 9(2)(g)(i)	s7(2)(a), 7(2)(c), 7(2)(j), 7(2)(F)(i), 7(2)(f)(ii)
17. Report from AUT Ventures	s 9(2)(b)(ii), s 9(2)(i) and s 9(2)(k)	s7(2)(b), 7(2)(h), 7(2)(i), 7(2)(j)
19. Report from AUT Ethics Committee	s 9(2)(a), 9(2)(b)(ii), s 9(2)(i), 9(2)(g)(i)	s7(2)(a), 7(2)(c), 7(2)(j), 7(2)(F)(i), 7(2)(f)(ii)
21.1 Draft Minutes of Finance and Audit Committee held on 24 November 2025	s 9(2)(b)(ii), s 9(2)(i) and s 9(2)(k)	s7(2)(b), 7(2)(h), 7(2)(i), 7(2)(j)
21.2 Draft Minutes of People and Culture Committee held on 24 November 2025	s 9(2)(b)(ii), s 9(2)(i) and s 9(2)(k)	s7(2)(b), 7(2)(h), 7(2)(i), 7(2)(j)
23. Other Business	s 9(2)(b)(ii), s 9(2)(i) and s 9(2)(k)	s7(2)(b), 7(2)(h), 7(2)(i), 7(2)(j)



PART A	3.2
OPEN AGENDA ITEM	

Council Agenda Paper

Subject: Adopt Charter of Academic Freedom and Statement on Political Neutrality

Date: 20 November 2025

Author: Council Secretary

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT COUNCIL ADOPT:

- THE CHARTER OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM AS THE UNIVERSITY STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM; AND
- THE POLITICAL NEUTRALITY STATEMENT:

"AUT DOES NOT TAKE A POSITION ON ISSUES THAT DO NOT DIRECTLY RELATE TO AUT'S CORE ROLE OR FUNCTIONS.

WHERE AN ISSUE IS NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO AUT'S CORE ROLE OR FUNCTIONS, AUT DOES NOT ASSUME THE RIGHT TO EXPRESS AN OPINION, OR TO COMMENT ON BEHALF OF ITS ENTIRE COMMUNITY. INSTEAD AUT RECOGNISES AND RESPECTS THAT A VARIETY OF VIEWS WILL BE HELD. THIS POSITION UPHOLDS THE UNIVERSITY'S CHARTER OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM.

THE CHARTER ACKNOWLEDGES THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE AUT COMMUNITY TO ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION TO ENSURE THAT A DIVERSITY OF VIEWS CAN BE FREELY EXPRESSED AND HEARD, WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR.

THE UNIVERSITY MAY DECIDE TO COMMENT ON MATTERS RELATED TO ITS CORE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS, INCLUDING THOSE RELATED TO TERTIARY EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND ITS OTHER ROLES"

Background

The New Zealand Government has recently amended the Education and Training Act 2020 through the Education and Training Amendment Bill (No. 2):

281A Requirement for university council to adopt statement on freedom of expression

- (1) *The council of a university must develop and adopt a statement that sets out the university's approach to freedom of expression.*
- (2) *The statement must be consistent with the following:*
 - (a) *universities should recognise that freedom of expression is critical to maintaining academic freedom:*
 - (b) *universities should actively foster an environment where ideas can be challenged, controversial issues can be discussed, and diverse opinions can*

be expressed, in a respectful manner consistent with any statute made by the university:

- (c) universities' policies and procedures relating to freedom of expression should be clear, consistently applied, and focused on fostering genuine debate rather than restricting it:*
 - (d) universities should not take positions on matters that do not directly concern their role or functions:*
 - (e) universities should not limit the freedom of expression of staff or students, except where the exercise of free expression is likely to be unlawful or to disrupt the ordinary activities of the university:*
 - (f) universities should seek to uphold their role as critic and conscience of society by providing a platform for invited speakers of diverse viewpoints:*
 - (g) universities should not deny the use of university premises by an invited speaker because of that speaker's ideas or opinions.*
- (3) In subsection (2)(g), invited speaker means a speaker invited by staff or any student association or student club of the university.*

281B Requirement for university council to establish complaints procedure relating to academic freedom and freedom of expression

- (1) The council of a university must establish and maintain a complaints procedure relating to academic freedom and freedom of expression.*
- (2) See also section 306(4)(h), which requires the nature and number of complaints relating to academic freedom and freedom of expression to be included in the council's annual report.*

On 26 June 2023, AUT's Academic Board approved the Charter of Academic Freedom as a high-level document that protects academic freedom and freedom of speech/expression. The Charter was endorsed by Council at its meeting on 31 July 2023.

At its meeting on 28 April 2025 Council endorsed the statement:

"AUT DOES NOT TAKE A POSITION ON ISSUES THAT DO NOT DIRECTLY RELATE TO AUT'S CORE ROLE OR FUNCTIONS.

WHERE AN ISSUE IS NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO AUT'S CORE ROLE OR FUNCTIONS, AUT DOES NOT ASSUME THE RIGHT TO EXPRESS AN OPINION, OR TO COMMENT ON BEHALF OF ITS ENTIRE COMMUNITY. INSTEAD AUT RECOGNISES AND RESPECTS THAT A VARIETY OF VIEWS WILL BE HELD.

THIS POSITION UPHOLDS THE UNIVERSITY'S CHARTER OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM. THE CHARTER ACKNOWLEDGES THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE AUT COMMUNITY TO ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION TO ENSURE THAT A DIVERSITY OF VIEWS CAN BE FREELY EXPRESSED AND HEARD, WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR.

THE UNIVERSITY MAY DECIDE TO COMMENT ON MATTERS RELATED TO ITS CORE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS, INCLUDING THOSE RELATED TO TERTIARY EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND ITS OTHER ROLES."

The recommendation is that Council by resolution formally adopt the Charter of Academic Freedom as its statement on academic freedom and adopt the statement on political neutrality.

CHARTER OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Auckland University of Technology (AUT), Te Wānanga Aronui o Tamaki Makau Rau, confirms the right of its community to academic freedom as defined in the Education and Training Act 2020 (or later equivalent). Academic freedom is integral to AUT performing its role as a critic and conscience of society.

AUT also recognises the rights of all, to freedom of expression as a fundamental right in a civilised democracy. The AUT community has the rights to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, expression, association and peaceful assembly and through the exercise of those rights can contribute to positive social change through free expression of opinion on matters of public interest, even if controversial.

AUT adopts this Charter in support of its institutional right to academic freedom and the rights of its community to academic freedom and freedom of expression. The exercise of these rights is subject to the limitations imposed by the law or by AUT, which are necessary for AUT's institutional autonomy, self-governance and its judicious administration. The exercise of the rights of academic freedom and freedom of expression must be informed by knowledge and be conducive to AUT's educational and research activities and the advancement of its academic endeavour.

AFFIRMATION

AUT affirms it will, subject to the limitations prescribed:

- Encourage the rights of academic freedom and freedom of expression, being fundamental to academic endeavour.
- Encourage its community, including its Council, staff, and students to inquire, discuss and freely challenge ideas.
- Support the right of its community to pursue knowledge and to debate, deliberate and disseminate knowledge through informed discussions that are conducted responsibly and with tolerance.

CHARTER

1. AUT declares its commitment to academic freedom as important in a democratic society and for intellectual, moral, cultural, and social advance, when lawfully exercised within an area of expertise and in accordance with the highest ethical standards and for the responsible pursuit of knowledge.
2. AUT will preserve and protect the interests of its community in equal dignity through our values that shall not be infringed upon:
 - a. Pono – the threshold of objective truth or opinion and expressed with integrity being expertise-based, either by research or embodied experience.
 - b. Tika – the expression is fair, and respects equality and accessibility and is just, respectful and expressed with courtesy and civility.
 - c. Aroha – the modelling of empathy, compassion, and attention
3. AUT recognises its responsibilities under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and acknowledges those laws which protect tangata whenua communities and all persons from being humiliated or intimidated.
4. AUT affirms its rights of autonomy, self-governance, and judicious administration as well as the rights and responsibilities of the AUT community, to pursue knowledge for its own sake, wherever the pursuit might lead.
5. AUT supports the responsible transmission of knowledge openly within academic and wider communities in conformity with the law and with the values and obligations of AUT.
6. AUT, in accordance with its values, undertakes to promote and support:
 - a. the responsible pursuit of knowledge through research in accordance with ethical and professional standards and the law;
 - b. the responsible dissemination of the outcomes of research in publications and creative works, and in public and professional discourse; and
 - c. the principled and informed discussion and debate on all aspects of knowledge and culture.
7. AUT values courage, civility and respect and promotes a climate where people disagree with tolerance.
8. In support of this Charter, AUT adopts the following Principles for the protection of academic freedom and freedom of speech and expression and affirms its commitment to upholding these Principles.

PRINCIPLES FOR THE PROTECTION OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Academic Freedom

Academic freedom for the purposes of these Principles, comprises the following elements:

- The freedom of AUT to regulate course content and to allocate resources.
 - The freedom of staff, in the course of their area of expertise to educate, discuss, or research and to disseminate and publish the results of their academic activities.
 - The freedom of staff and students, in the course of their academic activities, to engage in intellectual inquiry, to express their opinions and beliefs, to hear from a range of views and to contribute to public debate, in relation to those academic activities.
 - The freedom of staff and students to express their informed opinions.
1. Every member of the AUT community enjoys academic freedom subject only to the limitations or conditions imposed by:
 - a. AUT as necessary for:
 - i. institutional autonomy, self-governance or its judicious administration;
 - ii. the discharge of its education and research activities and to the extent that the exercise of the right is informed by knowledge;
 - iii. the duty to foster the wellbeing of students and staff;
 - iv. to give effect to its legal duties; and
 - v. the right of AUT to determine the programmes offered and the content and method of their delivery.
 - b. The right and freedom of others to express themselves and to hear and receive information and opinions.
 - c. The law.
 - d. Professional and ethical obligations.
 - e. AUT policies, including policy related to the implementation of the Charter.
 2. The AUT community must observe its duty to foster the wellbeing of staff and students, however, staff are not precluded from exercising academic freedom solely on the ground that it may offend or shock any student or class of students, or any staff member or any person.
 3. The exercise by a member of the AUT community of the right to academic freedom, subject to the above limitations, shall not constitute misconduct or receive any penalty imposed by AUT.

Freedom of Expression

1. Every member of the University community enjoys freedom of expression subject only to restraints or burdens imposed by:
 - a. AUT as necessary for:
 - i. its institutional autonomy, self-governance or its judicious administration.
 - ii. the discharge of its education and research activities and to the extent that the exercise of the right is informed by knowledge;
 - iii. its duty to foster the wellbeing of students and staff; and
 - iv. to give effect to its legal duties including its duties to visitors.
 - b. The right and freedom of others to freedom of expression.
 - c. The law.
 - d. Professional and ethical obligations.
 - e. AUT policies, including policy related to the implementation of the Charter.
2. AUT staff in their personal capacities are able to make lawful public comment on any issue outside their area of expertise, however, public comments that reference their employment at AUT must be truthful and informed.
3. Recognising that AUT is a place where people are free to express themselves, and a place where people are free to disagree and protest, subject only to the limitations imposed by:

PRINCIPLES FOR THE PROTECTION OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

- a. By AUT as necessary to:
 - i. the discharge of its education and research activities and ensuring these activities are not disrupted by protests;
 - ii. its duty to foster the wellbeing of students and staff including ensuring their safety and mitigating any risk that protests could result in injury; and
 - iii. give effect to its legal duties to visitors.
 - b. The right and freedom of others to express themselves and receive information and opinions and to express their respective views.
 - c. The law including those laws which protect persons from being humiliated or intimidated.
4. Subject to these limitations, a person's lawful speech or activity shall not constitute misconduct or receive penalty from AUT.
5. The AUT community must observe its duty to foster the wellbeing of staff and students, however, are not precluded from including content solely on the ground that it may offend or shock any student or class of students.

Visitors

6. AUT has the right to determine the terms and conditions for external and invited visiting speakers using AUT premises or facilities and may:
- a. require the person or organisers of the event to comply with AUT's booking procedures and to provide information relevant to the conduct and content of the event and any safety and security issues;
 - b. refuse permission to an invited or external visiting speaker where the content of the speech may:
 - i. involve the advancement of theories which fall below academic standards or could be detrimental to AUT's reputation; or
 - ii. negatively impact the wellbeing of staff or students; or
 - iii. be unlawful.
 - c. in the interests of public safety, require an external visiting speaker to contribute to the cost of providing security or other measures.
 - d. distinguish between invited visiting speakers and external visiting speakers in framing conditions.



PART A OPEN AGENDA ITEM	3.3
--	------------

Council Agenda Paper

Subject: Calls for Nominations for Chancellor and Pro Chancellor and Committee Membership

Date: 20 November 2025

Author: Council Secretary

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT COUNCIL RECEIVE AND COMMENT ON THE PROCESS FOR CALLS FOR:

- *NOMINATIONS FOR ELECTION AS CHANCELLOR AND PRO CHANCELLOR; AND*
 - *EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR COUNCIL COMMITTEES*
-

Background

The Nominations Committee is seeking nominations from Council for election as Chancellor and Pro Chancellor and expressions of interest for committee membership.

The Chancellor and Pro Chancellor will be elected by Council in accordance with paragraphs 5 – 11.5 of Council Standing Orders Statute.

Recommendations for Committee membership will be made to Council by the Nominations Committee in accordance with paragraph 4.2 of its terms of reference.

The Council Standing Orders and Nominations Committee ToRs are in Supplementary papers.

Process for Call for Nominations for Election as Chancellor and Pro Chancellor

1. The Nominations Committee, comprised of the Chancellor, Pro Chancellor, Vice Chancellor Chair of Finance and Audit Committee and Chair of People and Culture Committee (at least one member to be a ministerial appointee) through Council Secretary, will call for nominations for election as Chancellor and Pro Chancellor.
2. Self-nominations will not be accepted.
3. The call for nominations close on 13 February 2026:
4. The Nominations Committee will meet after 13 February to receive the nominations to be recorded in a meeting minute for the Council AGM papers.
5. All nominations will be provided to Council at the AGM.
6. Council will elect the Chancellor and Pro Chancellor at its AGM.
7. If there is more than one nominee, each nominee addresses the Council for up to [five] minutes. The nominee then leaves the room while the Council has a debate of up to [ten] minutes on the nominee. The nominee then returns to the room.
8. A secret ballot is held. All members present have one vote.
9. The Secretary counts the votes.

10. The Chancellor declares the candidate with the majority of votes elected. If the votes are tied, a second ballot is taken. If the votes are tied for a second time, the Chancellor has a casting vote.
11. If the Chancellor is standing for election he or she shall declare an interest and the Pro-Chancellor presides.
12. If the Pro-Chancellor is standing for election he or she shall declare an interest in the matter and the Council elects one of its members who does not have an interest in the election to preside.

Call for Expressions of Interest Committee Membership

1. The Nominations Committee will seek expressions of interest from Council for preference(s) to sit as a member of a Council committee.
2. Council members who wish to change their current Committee to indicate their preference(s).
3. The Nominations committee will take into account individual preference(s) and will be guided by the need to ensure that there is an equitable workload and that each committee or working group has an appropriate mix of knowledge, skills and experience.
4. Recommendations for membership of committees and chairs, will be submitted to the Council AGM for consideration.

Nomination Form

Nominations should be submitted using this form and returned to the Council Secretary at andrea.vujnovich@aut.ac.nz. Self-nominations will not be accepted.

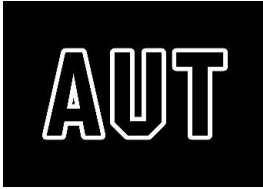
Nominations should be received by 5pm, Friday 13 February 2026. The Council Secretary will acknowledge receipt of nominations.

Nomination for election of Chancellor

I <i>[name of Council member]</i> nominate <i>[name of nominee]</i> as Chancellor
The nomination is seconded by <i>[name of Council member seconder]</i>
I confirm that the nominee has been notified of, and agrees to their nomination.
I confirm that the seconder agrees to second the nomination

Nomination for election of Pro Chancellor

I <i>[name of Council member]</i> nominate <i>[name of nominee]</i> as Pro Chancellor
The nomination is seconded by <i>[name of Council member seconder]</i>
I confirm that the nominee has been notified of, and agrees to their nomination.
I confirm that the seconder agrees to second the nomination



PART A OPEN AGENDA ITEM	4.1
--	------------

Council Agenda Paper

Subject: Minutes of Part A of the Council Meeting held on 29 September 2025

Date: 30 September 2025

Author: A Vujnovich

RECOMMENDATION:

*THAT THE MINUTES OF PART A OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2025 BE
CONFIRMED AS A TRUE AND CORRECT RECORD OF THAT MEETING*

CONFIDENTIAL



MINUTES

Council Meeting

Meeting held 29 September 2025 at 3.30 pm
AUT Millenium, Antares Place, North Shore, Auckland

PRESENT: R Campbell (Chair), D Salesa, J Smith, L Foliaki, W Ings, A Lemmer, S Clarke, M Darrow, M Huang, L Thomson, P Treacy.

SECRETARY: R Nottingham, Minute Taker

IN ATTENDANCE: L Williams (Chief Financial Officer and AVC Finance and Infrastructure); W Lawson DVC Academic; L McKenzie (Head of Sustainability) – Item 13.4.

IN APOLOGY: M Royal and A Vujnovich.

PART A OPEN AGENDA

The meeting was opened with a karakia led by the Chancellor.

1 WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS

Resolved

1. *THAT APOLOGIES BE RECEIVED FROM M ROYAL AND A VUJNOVICH*
2. *THAT THE ASSIGNMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS TO PART A AND PART B OF THE COUNCIL AGENDA BE APPROVED.*

2 DECLARATION/RECORDING OF INTERESTS

The attention of Members was drawn to the Conflicts of Interest Policy and the need to disclose any interest in an item on the agenda of the meeting as set out in Schedule 11, Clause 8 of the Education and Training Act 2020.

Resolved

THAT THE DECLARATIONS BE NOTED AND THE ACTIONS TAKEN BE ENDORSED.

3 CONSTITUTIONAL MATTER, CONFERMENT OF DEGREES AND POLICY

3.1 Granting, Rescinding, Revoking and Amending Qualifications –July to September 2025

THAT COUNCIL NOTE THAT THE CHANCELLOR HAS EXERCISED A DELEGATION UNDER THE COUNCIL DELEGATION POLICY AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GENERAL ACADEMIC STATUTE AND SECTION 283 OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACT 2020 TO:

JULY

1. *GRANT QUALIFICATIONS TO THE GRADUANDS ON THE ATTACHED SCHEDULE FOR THE 2025 JULY MONTHLY CERTIFICATE CYCLE ON 24 JULY.*
2. *GRANT QUALIFICATIONS TO THE GRADUANDS ON THE ATTACHED SCHEDULE FOR THE 2025 JULY CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY (COP) CYCLE ON 24 JULY.*

AUGUST

3. *GRANT QUALIFICATIONS TO THE GRADUANDS ON THE ATTACHED SCHEDULE FOR THE 2025 WINTER GRADUATION CORPORATE CYCLE ON 7 – 8 AUGUST.*

4. GRANT QUALIFICATIONS TO THE GRADUANDS ON THE ATTACHED SCHEDULE FOR THE 2025 WINTER GRADUATION CORPORATE CYCLE ON 7-8 AUGUST.
5. REVOKE QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE STUDENTS ON THE ATTACHED SCHEDULE AHEAD OF THE 2025 WINTER GRADUATION CORPORATE CYCLE ON 7-8 AUGUST.
SEPTEMBER
6. REVOKE QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE STUDENTS ON THE ATTACHED SCHEDULE AHEAD OF THE 2025 SEPTEMBER MONTHLY CORPORATE CYCLE ON 11 SEPTEMBER.
7. GRANT QUALIFICATIONS TO THE GRADUANDS ON THE ATTACHED SCHEDULE FOR THE 2025 SEPTEMBER MONTHLY CORPORATE CYCLE ON 11 SEPTEMBER.
8. GRANT QUALIFICATIONS TO THE GRADUANDS ON THE ATTACHED SCHEDULE FOR THE 2025 SEPTEMBER MONTHLY CERTIFICATE CYCLE ON 11 SEPTEMBER.
9. GRANT QUALIFICATIONS TO THE GRADUANDS ON THE ATTACHED SCHEDULE FOR THE 2025 SEPTEMBER CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY (COP) CYCLE ON 11 SEPTEMBER.
10. AMEND THE QUALIFICATION FOR THE STUDENTS IN THE ATTACHED SCHEDULE.

4 COUNCIL MEETINGS AND MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

4.1 Minutes of the previous meeting

Received

Draft Minutes (Part A), of the Council meeting held on 28 July 2025

Resolved

THE MINUTES OF PART A, COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28 JULY 2025 BE CONFIRMED AS A TRUE AND CORRECT RECORD OF THAT MEETING.

4.2 Matters Arising

Council noted the status of the matters arising.

5 VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Received

Vice Chancellor's Report

Noted in discussion

- Universities Advisory Group report encouraged greater collaboration amongst universities;
- University signed a MOU with Victoria University of Wellington and University of Otago addressing three areas including accommodation for students on placement;
- Discussions being held with the Minister seeking a national approach to languages courses;
- Student success had been embedded in the design of AUT Online and early data suggested good uptake by Māori and Pacifica students, requesting statistics on location of students;
- Requested information on resources to support student success in response to planned growth of international onshore students;
- University awaiting further details on replacement research funding, including approach to determining research impact;
- University's approach to international students was to protect the value and quality of education as much as growth, with risk to New Zealand reputation if other institutions discounted quality;
- QS five-star rating was a factor in university rankings though actual ranking driven off algorithms and publishing in large journals which had high costs associated with it;
- Information on initiatives alleviating student hardship addressed but next time would draw all relevant information together in one section;
- New format of the VC report was more consistent with the practices of other universities.

Actions:

- Management to provide details on location of students participating in AUT Online in next report.

- Management to provide information on resource plans to support student success given planned growth of international onshore students.
- Management to draw all information together on initiatives alleviating student hardship in one section of the VC report.

Resolved

THAT THE VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT BE RECEIVED.

6 CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

The Chancellor presented a verbal report on University Chancellor's meeting in August and discussion with Minister Reti regarding Council member vacancy and appointment next year.

Resolved

THAT THE CHANCELLOR'S VERBAL REPORT BE RECEIVED

7 PART A – REPORTS FROM BOARD, COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS OF COUNCIL

7.1 Academic Board Reports and Minutes, 28 July and 25 August 2025

Received

Academic Board Reports and Minutes, 28 July and 25 August 2025

Noted in Discussion:

- AUT joined group of Australian and NZ universities seeking better pricing with largest academic publishers, presenting risk of not being able to access some publications for a period;
- Publications and publication house services had some influence on university rankings;
- Management was developing "plan B" if negotiations faltered, noting Management would bring an update to Council in early 2026.

Action: Management to present update on negotiations with large academic publishing houses, including approach to plan B if needed in early 2026.

Resolved

THAT THE ACADEMIC BOARD REPORTS AND MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 JULY AND 25 AUGUST 2025 BE RECEIVED

8 HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING REPORT

8.1 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report, July-September 2025

Received

Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) Report, July-September 2025

Noted in discussion

- Noted insertion of programme timeframes in HSW report but requested improved readability;
- Sought assurance that AUT was compliant, noting Management assurance that regulatory authority comfortable to allow AUT to continue laboratory operations provided recommendations were implemented within timeframes;
- Executive committee was overseeing audit recommendations' implementation to ensure conditions and timeframes met, including clarity of responsibilities between divisions, noting Management would provide further information on this issue;
- Improved compliance recently tested with incident where staff member contravened protocols;
- Supported H&S governor training noting dates of in-person events had been circulated.

Action: Management to provide further information on how clarity between divisional/functional responsibilities will be resolved, as this was an issue raised through prior audits.

Resolved

THAT THE HEALTH SAFETY AND WELLBEING REPORT FOR JULY-SEPTEMBER 2025 BE RECEIVED.

9 TE TIRITI REPORT

No report

10 STRATEGIC REPORTS

No report

11 STUDENT SUCCESS

No report

12 CORRESPONDENCE REFERRED BY THE CHANCELLOR

No correspondence

13 OTHER MATTERS FOR DECISION OR NOTING

13.1 Update from AUTSA

Verbal Update

- New AUTSA president elected and his appointment would take effect from 1 January 2026;
- Student sentiment on campus has been positive, with clarifications sought around assessment extension process;
- Library change proposal and discussion around AI use in AUT assessment writing and marking.

Noted in discussion

- Council members acknowledged the contribution made by the current AUTSA President to Council;
- Confirmed that the incoming President should be invited to observe the December 2025 meeting as part of his induction.

Action: Management to invite incoming AUTSA President to observe the December 2025 Council meeting.

Resolved

THAT COUNCIL RECEIVE THE VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF AUTSA

13.2 Update from Council Member elected by the Academic Staff of AUT

Verbal Update

- Consider how financial and others pressures on students could be alleviated e.g. extension of scholarships or paid research assistants;
- Discussion needed if citation was selected method of measuring impact for Government research funding for disciplines where publication was not common e.g. film studies.

Noted in discussion

- Important detail yet to be revealed that would clarify effect of new government research fund on AUT, in terms of fund income and ranking, though early modelling had been undertaken by University Research Office.

Resolved

THAT THE UPDATE FROM THE COUNCIL MEMBER ELECTED BY THE ACADEMIC STAFF OF THE AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY BE RECEIVED.

13.3 Update from the Council Member elected by the Professional Staff of AUT

Verbal Update

- Uncertainty among professional staff if resourcing changes would result from funding changes in 2026;
- Clarity sought around student entry eligibility for AUT following NCEA changes earlier than scheduled in matters arising.

Noted in discussion

- Consistent and frequent staff communication, including by line managers, should help alleviate concerns;
- Supported presentation on school qualification changes and options and implications for AUT in early 2026.

Resolved

THAT THE UPDATE FROM THE COUNCIL MEMBER ELECTED BY THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF THE AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY BE RECEIVED.

13.4 Sustainability Update Report

Received

Sustainability Update Report

Noted in discussion

- Additional resource would be recruited to support sustainability data and reporting;
- Encouraged consideration of initiatives aimed at reduction of carbon emissions associated with international students;
- Supported a value and impact approach to reducing carbon, rather than buying carbon offsets;
- No agreed position internationally on energy consumed by data centres and AI, noting Management would circulate some articles to Council members;
- Encouraged AUT to embed carbon reduction in all construction projects, noting recent Tukutuku building project had done this and solar panels feasibility across all campuses being considered;
- Next sustainability report should address emissions regarding international students as well as staff travel emissions, an area that was increasing again post Covid;
- Work was underway to identify climate scenarios and effects specific to AUT in terms of risks and opportunities.

Action: Management should address emissions regarding international students, including how that is defined, as well as staff travel emissions, in the December Sustainability report.

Resolved

THAT THE SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE REPORT BE RECEIVED.

13.5 2026 Council Schedule

Received

2026 Council Schedule

Noted in discussion

- Agreed the scheduled Council and Committee meeting dates for the 2026.

Resolved

THAT THE 2026 COUNCIL SCHEDULE BE APPROVED

14 GENERAL BUSINESS AND ITEMS MOVED FROM PART B TO PART A

None

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

The Chancellor moved that the public be now excluded from Part B of this meeting, and that the following matters be discussed without public disclosure. This resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and section 9 of the Official Information Act, as the case may require, which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting **AND THAT** L Williams, W Lawson and R Nottingham be permitted to remain at this meeting, after the public has been excluded, because of their knowledge of the matters to be discussed in the proceedings while the public are excluded. This knowledge, which will be of assistance in relation to the matters to be discussed, is relevant to these matters because they relate to aspects of the administration of AUT for which those persons are responsible.

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter. The public conduct of each item below would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist under section 9 of the OIA identified below.	Ground(s) under section 48(1) LGOIMA for the passing of this resolution
15. Council Meeting Part B of the meeting held on 29 September 2025	s 9(2)(b)(ii), s 9(2)(i), 9(2)(k)	7(2)(f)(i), 7(2)(h), 7(2)(i), 7(2)(j)
16. Vice Chancellor's Report	s 9(2)(a), 9(2)(b)(ii), s 9(2)(i), 9(2)(g)(i)	s7(2)(a), 7(2)(c), 7(2)(j), 7(2)(F)(i), 7(2)(f)(ii)
18. Report from AUT Millenium	s 9(2)(a), 9(2)(b)(ii), s 9(2)(i), 9(2)(g)(i)	s7(2)(a), 7(2)(c), 7(2)(j), 7(2)(F)(i), 7(2)(f)(ii)
19. Report from AUT Ethics Committee	s 9(2)(a), 9(2)(b)(ii), s 9(2)(i), 9(2)(g)(i)	s7(2)(a), 7(2)(c), 7(2)(j), 7(2)(F)(i), 7(2)(f)(ii)
21.1 Draft Minutes of Finance and Audit Committee held on 15 September 2025	s 9(2)(b)(ii), s 9(2)(i) and s 9(2)(k)	s7(2)(b), 7(2)(h), 7(2)(i), 7(2)(j)

COUNCIL MEETING RAISED	ACTION	WHO	STATUS/ TARGET DATE
24 February 2025	13.3 Update from the Council Member elected by the Professional Staff of AUT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management to provide a briefing to Council on the likely effects of the new literacy and numeracy requirements on AUT at an appropriate time. <u>Update November 2025:</u> Refer separate paper from AVC Strategy & Planning.	AVC Strategy & Planning	Actioned
28 July 2025	7.1 Academic Board Reports and Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management to present to Council on Academic Quality including data, benchmarks and framework. 	DVC Academic	Open/April 2026
28 July 2025	9.1 Te Tiriti <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management to present on Māori student numbers and experience in AUT in a future report. 	Te Toi Aronui	Open/July 2026
29 September 2025	5. Vice Chancellor's Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management to provide details on location of students participating in AUT Online in next report. <u>Update November 2025:</u> Refer information in VC Report.	DVC Academic	Actioned
29 September 2025	5. Vice Chancellor's Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management to provide information on resource plans to support student success given planned growth of international onshore students. 	AVC Engagement	Open/April 2026
29 September 2025	5. Vice Chancellor's Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management to draw all information together on initiatives alleviating student hardship in one section of the VC report. <u>Update November 2025:</u> Please refer to paper in agenda item 23. In Part B December papers.	Vice Chancellor's Office	Actioned
29 September 2025	7.1. Academic Board Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management to present update on negotiations with large academic publishing houses, including approach to plan B if needed in early 2026. 	DVC Academic	Open/February 2026
29 September 2025	8.1 Health, Safety & Wellbeing Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management to provide further information on how clarity between divisional/functional responsibilities will be resolved, as this was an issue raised through prior audits. 	AVC People & Culture	Open/April 2026
29 September 2025	13.1 AUTSA President Update	Council Secretary	Actioned

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management to invite incoming AUTSA President to observe the December 2025 Council meeting. 		
29 September 2025	<p>13.4 Sustainability Update Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management should address emissions regarding international students including how that is defined as well as staff travel emissions, in the December Sustainability report. <p><u>Update November 2025:</u> Refer separate paper from Head of Sustainability, Strategy & Planning</p>	AVC Strategy & Planning	Actioned



PART A

OPEN AGENDA ITEM

4.2

Council Agenda Paper

Subject: Requested update on the implications of the NCEA reforms

Date: 28.11.2025

Author: Megan Skinner, AVC Strategy and Planning and Dr Felicity Reid, PVC Learning and Teaching

Introduction

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) has confirmed that from 2028, students seeking University Entrance will need to meet updated literacy and numeracy standards.

These standards are designed to ensure students have foundational skills in mathematics and statistics necessary for tertiary study.

Attached to this memo is AUT's draft submission on NCEA Reform prepared by the School of Education. It outlines the following:

- There is a risk that changes to UE requirements could unintentionally exclude disadvantaged groups from secondary education. This could reduce the number of students reaching university, particularly at AUT, which has the most diverse student body in New Zealand.
- Tertiary readiness should not be a barrier to access, and equity must be a guiding principle in any reform.
- The reform lacks detail on how curriculum, assessment, and equity will be balanced
- AUT proposes that any qualification system—whether a reformed NCEA or a replacement—must:
 - Be evidence-based
 - Support teachers effectively
 - Uphold equity as a core principle
 - Avoid gatekeeping that disadvantages underrepresented learners

Implications for AUT

It is difficult to anticipate the implications for AUT and our prospective students when there is still uncertainty around implementation of the reforms. To a large extent, tertiary preparedness depends on the secondary school's ability to effectively implement the reforms and support its students to achieve UE. Lower decile schools (or those with higher Equity Index) also have students with more complex needs. Currently, thirteen percent of AUT students with UE have a rank score below 140, and these students have significantly lower pass rates (73% vs. 87%) and need greater student support. If the new standards reduce the number of secondary students qualifying with UE, AUT could see a decline in undergraduate enrolments, particularly among priority learners. As a

university of opportunity, AUT has alternative pathways to entry but these are also likely to require constrained volumes of enrolments in future if AUT's overall government subsidy remains lower than demand.

Appendix 1. title here

Submission on the Proposal to Replace NCEA with New National Qualifications

To: nceaconsultation@education.govt.nz

From: Te Kura Mātauranga | School of Education, Auckland University of Technology

About Your Group or Organisation

Describe your group or organisation's interests in the NCEA changes:

AUT has been a university since 2000, and a place of learning for more than 125 years. Over the past two decades, AUT has built a domestic and international reputation as New Zealand's most diverse and vibrant university, a place of accessible and transformative learning and outstanding researchers, networks and partnerships, and a key contributor to the social and economic fabric of Auckland and beyond.

At AUT, our vision is enriching lives and creating a better world through technology, learning and discovery. Our students learn in an engaging environment that encourages, develops and challenges them to think deeply and apply their knowledge to real-life situations. Our students are connected to a global network of industry and business partners and become employment ready graduates. Our research is focused on real-world impact – encouraged by enterprise and innovation, with many of our subject areas being world-ranked.

AUT has the most diverse student population amongst New Zealand's universities. Comparatively, we have a high proportion of socio-economically disadvantaged students, and those for whom reaching educational parity is a national priority. We make a significant contribution to increasing participation in university education for priority students. We pride ourselves on being a place of opportunity and actively encourage enrolment by students who may have a greater distance to travel to reach traditional measures of success, as well as the greatest opportunity for tertiary education to transform their lives.

Māori students represent 12% of our domestic Equivalent Full Time Student (EFTS) and Pacific students 17%, with numbers in both groups having grown substantially over the last decade. While most universities skew strongly toward students from higher decile schools, AUT has a more even distribution of students by school decile. Around one-fifth of our EFTS come from decile 1-3 schools, compared with less than one-tenth for the sector overall (21% vs 8.2%, equating to 991 AUT EFTS vs 392 on average for the sector in 2022). We account for more EFTS from decile 1 or 2 schools than any other provider (40.9% and 34.4% of the sector totals, respectively) and have a relatively small proportion of those from higher decile schools (7.8% and 11.4% of sector totals at deciles 9 and 10).

AUT's Te Kura Mātauranga | School of Education is a leading university provider of teacher education in New Zealand with extensive expertise in curriculum development, assessment design, educational policy analysis, and inclusive education practices. Our academics have direct experience with NCEA implementation across all learning areas through teacher education programmes, educational research, and policy development.

Our school includes original NCEA designers, national moderators, school principals, and practitioners with diverse perspectives from secondary teaching, alternative education, and educational research. We have a professional and ethical interest in ensuring that any qualification system serves all New Zealand learners effectively while supporting the teaching profession and democratic educational values.

AUT believes the demographic make-up of our student population and academic expertise in education provides it with a unique and important view on the proposed secondary school assessment reforms.

What is the name of your group or organisation?

Te Kura Mātauranga | School of Education, Auckland University of Technology

Where is your group or organisation located?

Auckland University of Technology
School of Education
AG129, North Campus
90 Akoranga Drive
Northcote, Auckland 0627

Contact Information:

Dr Stuart Deerness
stuart.deerness@aut.ac.nz

Part 1: Case for Change

Do you agree that our national qualifications should assess against a national curriculum?

Response: Strongly agree

We strongly support curriculum-led assessment design as a fundamental principle of sound educational practice. However, we are concerned that the current proposal reverses proper sequencing by advancing assessment changes before the curriculum development is complete. Assessment should follow and support curriculum, not drive it. The Refreshed New Zealand Curriculum must be completed and thoroughly embedded before designing assessment systems that accurately and authentically measure curriculum achievement. This “cart before the horse” approach risks creating misalignment and compromising both curriculum and assessment effectiveness.

What elements, if any, of NCEA’s flexibility do you think should be retained in a future design of the qualifications?

Any future qualification system must retain three critical elements of NCEA’s flexibility. First, multiple pathways to qualifications that recognise diverse forms of achievement and varied learning contexts. Second, internal assessment opportunities that enable students to demonstrate learning through different modes and cultural frameworks. Third, standards-based assessment principles that focus on what students achieve rather than how they rank against peers.

The system must also maintain flexible recognition of achievement that accommodates different learning timeframes and life circumstances. It must respond to local contexts, enabling culturally responsive and contextually appropriate teaching. Most importantly, it must recognise diverse forms of excellence beyond traditional academic hierarchies and percentage rankings.

These flexible pathways are particularly crucial for addressing the systemic under-achievement of Māori and Pacific students in school qualifications, which prevents disproportionate numbers from accessing university education and entering professions. NCEA purposefully widened achievement pathways to overcome these inequities. Any future system must continue to widen rather than narrow these pathways, ensuring that essential features like internal assessment, credits for a wide range of disciplinary and vocational standards, and use of digital technology for providing evidence remain available to support students who may be first in family or from Pacific language homes.

These elements remain essential for maintaining educational equity and serving New Zealand’s diverse student population effectively. They represent hard-won innovations that addressed the exclusionary effects of previous high-stakes examination systems. The Government should not abandon these innovations without clear evidence that proposed alternatives will better serve diverse learners, particularly given the risk that proposed changes may recreate the exclusionary barriers that NCEA specifically eliminated.

Do you agree that the current NCEA requirements do NOT consistently measure student knowledge, skills and readiness for future study, training or employment?

Response: Somewhat disagree

Which aspects of the current NCEA requirements do you think provide for a consistent measure of student knowledge, skills, and readiness?

NCEA demonstrates several key strengths in measuring student readiness. Standards-based assessment clearly articulates what students can demonstrate. Multiple assessment modes allow diverse learners to show their capabilities effectively. Internal assessment integration provides authentic, contextualised measurement of learning that reflects real-world applications.

The system's flexible pathways prepare students for diverse post-school destinations rather than forcing them through single routes. NCEA recognises vocational and academic learning as equally valid forms of knowledge and skill development, serving contemporary workforce needs more effectively than traditional hierarchical approaches.

Critics often cite consistency issues, but these reflect implementation challenges and inadequate system support rather than fundamental design flaws. Some describe NCEA as having evolved problematically through incremental changes over time. However, we question whether expressions of a loss of confidence in the system represent genuine education problems or reflect a narrow understanding of the system in totality or preference for historic approaches.

The Government can address current challenges through enhanced moderation, professional development, and clearer guidance. Wholesale system replacement risks eliminating proven innovations that have expanded educational opportunities for diverse learners.

Do you agree that the senior secondary qualifications system needs to improve?

Response: Somewhat agree

Which parts of the senior secondary qualification system do you think should be prioritised for improvement?

The system requires improvement in several priority areas. First, the Ministry of Education must ensure curriculum-assessment alignment by completing curriculum development before designing assessments. Second, it must provide enhanced professional development and support for teachers to implement assessment effectively. Third, the Government must address the fundamental governance failure between the Ministry of Education and NZQA that prevents coherent system management.

Schools need adequate resources to deliver quality programmes without overwhelming already stretched teachers. Moderation and quality assurance systems require development that maintains standards while supporting teacher professionalism. The system needs comprehensive equity monitoring and support to ensure all learners achieve success.

Most importantly, the Government must conduct an evidence-based evaluation of what specifically is "failing" and provide this alongside proposals for reform, so we avoid making assumptions about system-wide problems and can instead assess the trade-offs, opportunities, and problems with changing the system. Current criticisms often lack the rigorous analysis necessary to justify major structural changes.

These improvements can be achieved within NCEA's existing framework through targeted, evidence-based interventions. Wholesale replacement risks eliminating proven equity innovations that have expanded educational opportunities for diverse learners.

The Government wants the senior secondary qualification to be coherent, consistent, and credible, including with access to enhanced Vocational Education and Training (VET) subjects. Do you think there are other opportunities for positive change with the new qualifications, outside of what has been raised in the discussion document?

Response: Strongly agree

Describe other opportunities for positive change that are not covered in the discussion document:

The Government must address several critical opportunities that the discussion document overlooks.

The Government must establish genuine democratic consultation processes with adequate time for meaningful stakeholder engagement. The current six-week consultation period risks not allowing sufficient time for considered input, and carries the perception that there are measures of predetermination in the proposal, which is not conducive for sector buy-in, best-practice policy development or confidence in the longevity of the reforms. Any changes must address teacher professional sustainability by recognising that educators already face unprecedented workload pressures and reform fatigue that threaten both retention and educational quality.

Cross-party educational planning is essential to provide system stability beyond electoral cycles and end the destructive pattern of successive governments overturning educational policies. The Government must conduct evidence-based problem identification with a clear analysis of which specific aspects of NCEA fail students and a rigorous demonstration of how proposed solutions address identified issues.

The Government must recognise that criticisms of NCEA “rigour” often reflect preferences for traditional approaches that privilege existing educational advantages rather than objective assessments of educational effectiveness. A comprehensive equity impact assessment must precede the implementation of changes that may recreate barriers NCEA eliminated.

The system needs enhanced support for diverse learners, including those with learning differences, transient students, and those from non-traditional educational backgrounds. Community engagement processes must reach beyond traditional stakeholder groups to include those most affected by educational exclusion.

Part 2: Proposals

Proposal 1: Working with Industry to Create VET Subjects

Overall, do you support proposal 1? This proposal is that the government will work with industry to create Vocational Education and Training (VET) subjects

Response: Neutral

Which aspects of proposal 1 do you have concerns about, and why?

While we support enhanced vocational pathways in principle, several significant concerns require attention.

The proposed development schedule appears unrealistic. It is unlikely that Industry Skills Boards can create quality standards and educational resources that meet both industry and educational requirements within the proposed timeframe.

Creating hierarchies between “approved” and “non-approved” VET areas will limit vocational opportunities and reinforce traditional academic-vocational divisions that disadvantage students pursuing non-traditional pathways. This approach contradicts NCEA’s equity principles.

Many schools lack the resources, facilities, and expertise to deliver specialised VET subjects effectively without significant additional support. The proposal provides no clear funding mechanism to address these capacity gaps.

Quality assurance frameworks remain unclear, risking VET standards that lack pedagogical rigour or coherence with broader educational objectives. The proposal fails to demonstrate how these standards will maintain educational integrity while meeting industry requirements.

The complexity of coordinating partnerships between schools, employers, and tertiary providers requires substantial time for relationship-building that the proposed timeline does not accommodate. Rushed implementation will compromise partnership quality and student outcomes.

What benefits do you think proposal 1 will have for student learning and achievement?

Potential benefits include enhanced workplace relevance and clearer pathways between secondary and tertiary vocational education. However, these benefits depend entirely on implementation that addresses our identified concerns and maintains educational quality alongside industry relevance. Without addressing these fundamental issues, the proposal risks creating a two-tier system that undermines rather than enhances student achievement.

The government understands that investment is needed to make sure VET learning is a success. Aside from funding, are there practical or operational implications you think need to be considered for schools to successfully deliver VET subjects?

The Government must provide extended development timelines for quality standard creation and resource development. Current proposals underestimate the time required to create effective VET programmes that meet both educational and industry standards.

Schools require comprehensive teacher professional development in VET pedagogies and industry connections. Many teachers lack the specialised knowledge and industry experience necessary to deliver effective vocational education. The Government must establish ongoing professional development programmes that connect educators with industry practitioners.

Schools need equipment and facility upgrades to create practical learning environments that reflect contemporary workplace standards. They also require coordination systems for industry partnerships at local and regional levels, as these relationships cannot develop organically within proposed timelines.

The system needs quality assurance frameworks that maintain educational standards while respecting industry expertise. Schools must have flexible pathways for non-approved VET areas to prevent exclusion of emerging or niche vocational interests that may not fit prescribed categories.

Integration mechanisms that connect VET learning with broader educational objectives are essential for maintaining system coherence. Without these connections, VET risks becoming isolated from the wider curriculum, undermining both vocational and academic learning outcomes.

Proposal 2: Foundational Award and New Senior Secondary Qualifications

Do you agree that replacing NCEA Level 1 with a Foundational Award in numeracy and literacy is a good way to prepare students with the basic skills needed to successfully engage with learning in Years 12 and 13?

Response: Strongly disagree

Describe any concerns you have about the Foundational Award being able to prepare students for learning in Years 12 and 13:

The Foundational Award proposal creates several serious problems that will harm student outcomes.

Recreating systemic barriers This proposal fundamentally recreates the “qualification cliff-edge” that NCEA specifically eliminated. It concentrates assessment pressure into Years 12-13, disadvantaging students who benefit from incremental qualification building and scaffolded achievement pathways. This represents a significant equity regression that abandons proven innovations.

Accepting reduced outcomes The Ministry admits that achievement rates will “likely decline” under this system. This represents a conscious decision to accept reduced educational outcomes, particularly for vulnerable learners. Such an approach is both educationally and ethically unacceptable.

Eliminating supportive pathways The proposal eliminates motivating intermediate achievements that support diverse learning trajectories and circumstances. It creates exactly the high-stakes pressure environment that NCEA moved away from. This particularly harms students facing challenging circumstances who need flexible, supportive pathways to success.

Reducing curriculum flexibility The approach narrows the curriculum and responsive approaches that require curriculum and assessment flexibility. It forces standardisation that conflicts with responsive teaching practices.

The Government could re-purpose Level 1 as a genuine foundational qualification covering literacy and numeracy plus broad subject exploration. It should maintain multiple entry and exit points that support diverse learning circumstances. The system should lower stakes while preserving pathways rather than creating additional barriers to achievement.

Do you think other areas of learning or achievement should be considered as part of the Foundational Award? For example, should a certain level of student attendance be required? Describe these areas of learning or achievement.

If the Government proceeds with a Foundational Award despite our concerns, it should include several essential learning areas that current proposals overlook.

Rejecting attendance requirements Attendance requirements would be deeply problematic and must be rejected. Such requirements penalise students facing circumstances beyond their control, including health issues, family responsibilities, and socio-economic barriers. The Government should not transform these challenges into additional barriers to qualification achievement.

Attendance requirements would recreate exactly the kind of exclusionary mechanisms that NCEA eliminated. They would particularly disadvantage vulnerable students who most need educational support and pathways to success.

Maintaining equity focus Any Foundational Award must prioritise equity and inclusion rather than creating new barriers. The focus should remain on what students can achieve rather than being affected by norm referencing or circumstances that may prevent their physical presence in traditional classroom settings.

Most students will complete the New Zealand Certificate of Education in Year 12. Do you agree it is important for the Government to consider ways to ensure more students stay at school until the end of Year 12?

Response: Somewhat agree

How can we make sure students stay in school until the end of Year 12 and have a better chance of achieving a meaningful qualification?

The Government must address root causes of student disengagement rather than simply restructuring qualifications.

Creating engaging learning environments Schools need relevant, engaging curriculum that connects to student interests, aspirations, and cultural backgrounds. They must offer multiple pathways and flexible learning options that accommodate diverse circumstances and learning styles. The system should recognise diverse forms of achievement to motivate continued engagement rather than relying on narrow academic measures that exclude many students.

Providing comprehensive support Schools require comprehensive pastoral and academic support systems that address barriers to learning. These systems must identify and respond to individual student needs before disengagement occurs. Professional support systems that prevent teacher burnout and maintain educational quality are essential for creating school environments that genuinely support student retention.

Addressing systemic inequities The Government must address socio-economic barriers that force students to leave school for economic reasons. This requires systemic intervention that extends beyond education policy to include family support, employment opportunities, and community development. Many students leave school not because they lack ability or motivation, but because economic necessity forces impossible choices between education and survival.

Rejecting qualification restructuring as the solution Student retention cannot be achieved through qualification restructuring alone. The current proposal risks making the problem worse by creating additional barriers and pressure points. Instead, the Government must invest in comprehensive support systems and address the systemic inequities that push students out of traditional educational pathways.

Proposal 3: Shifting Focus to a Structured Subject Approach

Overall, do you support a subject approach to assessments at Years 12 and 13?

Response: Somewhat do not support it

What are your concerns about a subject approach to assessments at Years 12 and 13?

The mandated five-subject structure creates several serious problems that will harm diverse learners and undermine educational equity.

Marginalising diverse learners The rigid structure marginalises students whose strengths lie in creative, integrated, or alternative fields. It effectively narrows educational opportunities for those who do not fit traditional academic patterns. This eliminates the flexibility that has supported students with learning differences, varying circumstances, and non-traditional educational pathways.

Reducing cultural responsiveness The proposed approach reduces opportunities for culturally responsive pedagogies that require curriculum flexibility to be authentic and meaningful. Rigid subject boundaries prevent the integrated approaches that can make knowledge meaningful within contemporary educational contexts. The mandated subject structure will particularly harm Māori and Pacific students, who experience systemic under-achievement in traditional qualification systems. NCEA purposefully widened achievement pathways to address these inequities, but rigid subject structures and high-stakes external examinations will recreate the exclusionary barriers that prevented disproportionate numbers of Māori and Pacific students from accessing university education and entering professions. A system that narrows pathways to achievement will only recognise certain knowledge forms and effectively close off opportunities for students with diverse skill sets who diverge from traditional, mainstream academic norms.

Reinforcing academic hierarchies The structure reinforces academic hierarchies that privilege traditional subject boundaries over integrated and applied learning approaches. It recreates the sorting mechanisms that NCEA challenged, potentially restoring exclusionary effects for students whose learning strengths and interests do not align with predetermined subject structures.

Undermining teacher professionalism The mandated approach undermines teacher professionalism by reducing autonomy in adapting teaching to local contexts and student needs. It forces educators into inflexible frameworks that prevent responsive teaching practices.

Privileging narrow educational values This system privileges a narrow conception of educational value that reflects traditional cultural capital rather than the diverse forms of knowledge and capability needed in contemporary society. It represents a regression toward elitist educational models that NCEA specifically rejected.

The Government should maintain NCEA's flexible approach that recognises diverse forms of achievement and learning rather than imposing structures that recreate educational exclusion.

Do you agree that it is important for students to engage with the full curriculum (rather than segments) for vocational and general subjects?

Response: Somewhat disagree

What do you think are the benefits of being able to engage with parts of the curriculum (segments) of vocational and general subjects?

Curriculum flexibility provides essential educational benefits that support diverse learners and effective teaching practices.

Enhancing teacher professionalism. Flexible curricula support teacher professionalism by enabling teachers to adapt curriculum to local contexts, student needs, and emerging opportunities. This flexibility allows teachers to respond to their students' specific circumstances and interests rather than forcing predetermined structures.

Meeting diverse needs Complete curriculum coverage may suit some learners, but mandating this for all students reduces the responsiveness and contextual adaptation that makes education effective for diverse populations. Flexibility can ensure that education serves all students rather than just those who fit traditional academic patterns.

Supporting authentic assessment Flexible curricula enable authentic assessment opportunities that connect learning to real-world applications and student experiences. This approach supports diverse learners and

cultural approaches to knowledge that may not align with predetermined subject structures, making education more meaningful and relevant.

Promoting integrated learning Meaningful learning often occurs through integrated, cross-disciplinary approaches rather than artificial subject boundaries. Curriculum flexibility allows for this kind of authentic, connected learning that reflects how knowledge operates in real-world contexts.

The Government should retain and strengthen these flexible approaches rather than imposing rigid structures that limit educational responsiveness.

Do you support some subjects being required as part of the Year 11 curriculum? For example, English and Mathematics or, in Māori-medium settings, Te Reo Rangatira and Pāngarau.

Response: Support it

Would you support other subjects being required as part of the curriculum at Year 11, aside from English and Mathematics or Te Reo Rangatira and Pāngarau?

We support literacy and numeracy requirements but caution against excessive prescription that narrows curriculum opportunities. Additional required subjects might include science for scientific literacy essential in contemporary life and informed citizenship, social sciences for civic engagement, critical thinking, and democratic participation, and physical education or hauora for wellbeing and health literacy.

However, requirements must be carefully balanced against flexibility for diverse interests and pathways. Overly prescriptive approaches risk curriculum narrowing, reduced student engagement, and the recreation of academic hierarchies that disadvantage non-traditional learners and limit opportunities for culturally responsive teaching.

Aside from additional funding, what practical resources and supports do you think will be important for learners and schools when shifting to a subject approach?

Schools need extensive professional development focused on deep curriculum understanding before assessment implementation, quality teaching resources developed collaboratively with educators rather than imposed from above, and clear moderation systems that support rather than burden teachers. The Government must provide adequate implementation time for thoughtful change rather than rushed compliance, ongoing professional support beyond initial implementation, and flexibility mechanisms for schools serving diverse communities. Evidence-based evaluation systems must monitor equity impacts and unintended consequences to prevent harm to vulnerable student groups. Without these comprehensive supports, the subject approach risks becoming another inadequately supported reform that places impossible demands on schools while failing to improve student outcomes.

Proposal 4: Strengthening Achievement Requirements

Do you agree that the proposed achievement requirements for the new qualifications are easy to understand? This includes that students must achieve a passing grade in at least four subjects and achieve the Foundational Award.

Response: Somewhat disagree

What parts of the proposed achievement requirements do you find confusing to understand?

The proposal creates significant confusion through several unclear elements. The Government fails to define “passing grades” with clear criteria, standards, or educational rationale. The four-subject requirement lacks educational justification and appears arbitrary. Foundation Award prerequisites may create more barriers rather than providing support for struggling learners. The proposal lacks transparency in determining grade boundaries for the A-E system and fails to connect these boundaries to learning objectives. The Government provides no clear explanation of how VET subjects integrate within the overall achievement framework. Most critically, the proposal leaves undefined the relationship between new qualifications and university entrance requirements, creating uncertainty for students planning their educational pathways.

Do you agree the four subject requirements should be achievable for most students?

Response: Strongly disagree

Describe your concerns about a four subject requirement not being achievable for most students:

The four-subject requirement will systematically exclude vulnerable learners and contradict stated inclusion goals. This arbitrary requirement will prevent students with learning differences, health issues, or challenging life circumstances from achieving qualifications, recreating the “cliff-edges” that excluded many students from previous systems. The requirement will disadvantage students whose learning strengths don’t align with traditional subject boundaries or who thrive in integrated learning environments. It will penalise students who must prioritise work or family responsibilities for circumstances beyond their control, making four subjects impossible to maintain effectively. The approach artificially constrains options for students interested in specialised, creative, or integrated learning approaches, reversing NCEA’s innovations in recognising diverse forms of achievement. Rather than celebrating diverse achievements, it creates additional hurdles that will disengage precisely those students NCEA was designed to support toward success. This requirement will systematically exclude students that our qualification system should include and support, effectively reinstating the sorting mechanisms that NCEA replaced.

Aside from additional funding, what other changes, supports, or mitigations do you think are needed to support strengthened achievement requirements?

The Government must provide comprehensive learning support systems that address barriers faced by diverse student populations, alternative pathway provisions for students who cannot meet standard requirements due to legitimate circumstances, and enhanced pastoral care and guidance systems that support student success holistically. Schools need flexible assessment scheduling that accommodates health issues, family circumstances, and cultural commitments. Teachers require professional development in inclusive teaching practices that support rather than sort students. The system needs community and family engagement programmes that address systemic barriers to educational achievement, alongside ongoing monitoring systems to identify and address unintended equity consequences of strengthened requirements. Without these comprehensive supports, strengthened requirements will simply create additional barriers that exclude vulnerable students rather than improving educational outcomes for all learners.

Part 3: Implications and Next Steps

Do you agree that the proposals will create better alignment between the curriculum and assessments when compared to NCEA?

Response: Strongly disagree

What concerns do you have about the proposals creating better alignment between the curriculum and assessments when compared to NCEA?

The proposal creates major alignment problems that will worsen rather than improve curriculum-assessment integration. The changes would reverse the appropriate development order by advancing assessment changes before completing curriculum development, preventing authentic alignment. The current coordination failure between the Ministry of Education and NZQA makes coherent qualification development impossible without major structural reform.

Teachers cannot achieve effective curriculum-assessment integration without adequate preparation time, resources, and system stability that the proposal fails to provide. Rigid subject structures will prevent contextually appropriate curriculum-assessment integration that responds to diverse student and community needs. Single exams and basic grading systems cannot effectively assess the complexity of curriculum-based skills and knowledge that modern education requires.

The proposal risks exacerbating rather than solving the problem of assessment driving curriculum, particularly if the Government rushes implementation without proper preparation. True alignment requires curriculum completion first, followed by careful assessment design that authentically measures curriculum objectives while maintaining responsiveness to diverse learning contexts. The proposed approach abandons these principles and will create greater misalignment than exists under NCEA.

Do you agree that the proposed changes will improve the credibility and coherence of the national senior secondary qualifications?

Response: Strongly disagree

What concerns do you have about the proposals improving credibility and coherence of the national senior secondary qualifications?

NCEA is a credible, internationally recognised qualification system, and while targeted improvements are always possible, criticisms of its fundamental credibility are misplaced. The proposal threatens credibility through rushed development that risks creating a poorly functioning system. Moving away from inclusive, responsive approaches that have served diverse learners will compromise credibility as a system serving all New Zealanders effectively. The proposed changes will overwhelm an already critically stretched teaching profession, threatening both teacher retention and educational effectiveness that undermines system quality and credibility.

The proposal lacks a sufficient evidence base and provides inadequate research foundation for proposed approaches. This may lead to ineffective changes based on assumptions rather than rigorous analysis. Major changes without cross-party consensus create ongoing political instability that undermines system credibility and prevents effective long-term planning.

The proposed changes may enhance credibility only among those who already possess traditional educational advantages while diminishing it for communities that NCEA better serves. This selective

credibility contradicts the principles of a truly national qualification system. True credibility emerges from well-designed, properly implemented, equitable systems that demonstrably serve all students effectively, not from mimicking traditional approaches that previously excluded many learners. The current proposal risks damaging rather than enhancing the genuine credibility that comes from educational effectiveness and equity.

Aside from additional funding, what further changes or resources do you think would be helpful to make sure students can successfully complete the new qualifications?

The Government must provide extended consultation and development timelines that allow for genuine democratic engagement and evidence-based design. Schools need comprehensive professional development programmes that build authentic capability rather than superficial compliance, and enhanced student support systems that address diverse learning needs and systemic barriers.

Schools require quality teaching resources developed collaboratively with educators who understand classroom realities. The system needs robust evaluation frameworks for ongoing improvement and equity monitoring, alongside community engagement processes that support student success and address systemic inequities.

The Government must build a cross-party consensus for educational system stability that transcends electoral cycles. Most critically, it must provide clear evidence about what problems the current system actually creates and a rigorous demonstration of how proposed solutions will address these issues. Without these fundamental requirements, the new qualifications risk creating additional barriers rather than supporting student success. The Government should not proceed with major systemic changes until it can demonstrate both the necessity for change and the effectiveness of proposed solutions.

With appropriate resources, do you agree that the proposed timeline is achievable? The proposed timeline includes introducing the Foundational Award in 2028 and the two new senior secondary qualifications in 2029 and 2030 for Years 12 and 13 respectively.

Response: Strongly disagree

What concerns do you have about the proposed timeline being achievable and what do you think is a reasonable timeline?

The proposed timeline is problematic and will create more problems than it solves. The Government cannot realistically achieve meaningful change within this timeframe. Incomplete curriculum development must be finished and embedded first. Teachers need years, not months, to develop genuine capability for major system changes through adequate professional development. The complexity of system coordination requires extensive planning, testing, and refinement that cannot be rushed without compromising educational quality.

The teacher workforce already experiences unprecedented pressure from continuous reform. Additional major changes will prove catastrophic for retention and educational quality. Democratic consultation requires time for meaningful engagement and iterative development that the proposed timeframe cannot accommodate.

A reasonable timeline requires a minimum of 5-7 years from curriculum completion. This includes 2-3 years for collaborative assessment design and comprehensive resource development, 2 years for extensive professional development that builds authentic capability, and 1-2 years for systematic piloting, evaluation,

and system testing. The Government must include ongoing evaluation and refinement phases with feedback loops to prevent unintended consequences and ensure system effectiveness.

This approach allows for the evidence-based, iterative development that characterises successful educational reform. It prevents the rushed implementation that has compromised previous policy initiatives and threatens to damage this one. The Government should prioritise getting reform right rather than meeting arbitrary political deadlines that serve electoral cycles rather than educational needs.

Is there anything else that you would like to say about the proposals?

Fundamental Concerns About Democratic Processes and Educational Principles

Consultation Process and Democratic Engagement

The six-week consultation period represents a fundamental failure of democratic engagement for changes of this magnitude. This timeframe prevents meaningful stakeholder engagement, careful evidence analysis, and the iterative development that characterises successful educational reform. When contrasted with the extensive, multi-year consultation processes that preceded NCEA's introduction and The Education Conversation | Kōrero Mātauranga, the current approach suggests either a profound misunderstanding of the system's complexity or predetermined outcomes that disregard sector feedback. Democratic education policy requires genuine consultation that respects the expertise and experience of those who will implement and be affected by these changes.

Professional Impact and System Sustainability

New Zealand teachers are experiencing unprecedented workload pressures and reform fatigue that threaten both individual wellbeing and system-wide educational effectiveness. OECD data consistently show that our teachers report among the highest levels of assessment-related stress internationally. The current proposal ignores these professional realities and risks creating a workforce crisis that compromises educational quality across the system. Implementing major curriculum and assessment changes simultaneously represents an unsustainable burden that will accelerate teacher shortages and undermine the educational outcomes the proposal seeks to improve. Meaningful qualification changes must prioritise professional sustainability alongside student outcomes, recognising that teacher wellbeing and system effectiveness are inextricably linked.

Educational Equity and the Question of Cultural Capital

NCEA purposefully widened achievement pathways to address the systemic under-achievement of Māori and Pacific students in school qualifications, which prevents disproportionate numbers from accessing university education and entering professions. The proposed changes risk narrowing rather than widening these pathways, abandoning decades of policy development aimed at overcoming educational inequity. Rigid subject structures and high-stakes external examinations will continue to exclude Māori and Pacific students who diverge from traditional, mainstream family and cultural norms. A system that narrows pathways to achievement will only recognise certain knowledge forms and effectively close off opportunities for students with diverse skill sets. Essential features that support students who may be first in family or from Pacific language homes—including internal assessment, credits for a wide range of disciplinary and vocational standards, and use of digital technology for providing evidence—must be retained. The Government must implement assessment reforms that expand rather than contract opportunities for diverse learners to succeed.

The push toward “international comparability” requires critical examination. NCEA’s innovative features—such as its standards-based model and integration of internal assessment—made it internationally distinctive rather than deficient. The drive to benchmark against more traditional international systems risks sacrificing New Zealand’s unique educational strengths in pursuit of generic global standards that may be inappropriate for our educational and cultural context. True educational excellence emerges from building on contextual strengths and innovations, not from abandoning them to mimic systems designed for different educational environments.

Evidence-Based Policy Making and Problem Definition

The proposal suffers from a fundamental evidence deficit regarding which specific aspects of NCEA fail students and how proposed changes would address clearly identified issues. Educational policy must be grounded in rigorous research and evidence rather than assumptions about system failure or educational effectiveness. The consultation document provides insufficient evidence about which students current arrangements fail and how, what specific learning outcomes NCEA does not achieve, how proposed changes would demonstrably improve these identified problems, and what evidence supports the effectiveness of the proposed alternative approaches.

Without this foundational evidence, the proposal asks the education sector to support wholesale system change based on assertions rather than demonstrated need or proven solutions.

System Stability and Long-term Educational Planning

Ensuring there is a long-term bipartisan approach is important in order to avoid a period of instability and the threat of successive governments continuing to overturn educational policies, which has the effect of undermining system effectiveness and professional confidence. The cycle from NELP developed through extensive consultation under the previous government to the current coalition’s distinctly different Strategic Intentions 2024-2029 exemplifies this damaging instability. Educational reforms of this magnitude require clear bipartisan, long-term planning that transcends electoral cycles and provides the stability necessary for effective implementation and evaluation.

The current proposal’s rushed consultation and implementation timeline exemplifies the politically-driven decision-making that prevents sustainable educational development. The willingness to engage in long-term, evidence-based system development is needed for genuine educational reform, rather than reactive change that responds to political pressure rather than educational evidence.

System Coordination and Implementation Capacity

The current coordination between the Ministry of Education and NZQA represents a fundamental governance failure that makes coherent qualification development impossible without major structural reform. This breakdown in system management must be addressed before attempting changes of this magnitude. The proposal assumes implementation capacity that current evidence suggests does not exist, risking the creation of a poorly coordinated system that serves neither students nor teachers effectively.

Alternative Approach: Evidence-Based Improvement Within Existing Framework

Rather than wholesale replacement that risks eliminating proven equity innovations, we recommend completing curriculum development first and designing assessment systems that authentically support curriculum objectives rather than rushing assessment changes that may drive curriculum inappropriately. Comprehensive system analysis with clear evidence about current problems and proposed solutions must precede implementation of changes. Investment in targeted NCEA improvements that address identified

problems while preserving equity innovations and flexible pathways that serve diverse learners represents a more prudent approach.

Extended consultation with genuine democratic engagement that respects sector expertise, community voices, and the complexity of educational change is essential. Realistic implementation timelines that support rather than overwhelm schools and teachers while allowing for proper preparation and resource development must replace the current rushed approach. The Government must maintain principles of fairness, inclusion, and flexibility as educational strengths rather than weaknesses for serving New Zealand's diverse student population effectively.

Building cross-party consensus for educational stability and evidence-based long-term planning that transcends electoral cycles would provide the foundation for sustainable improvement. The Government must address fundamental governance issues between MoE and NZQA before attempting major system changes as a prerequisite for effective reform.

Conclusion

Auckland University of Technology's Te Kura Mātauranga | School of Education is prepared to contribute our extensive expertise to developing a qualification system that serves all New Zealand learners effectively. However, this requires genuine commitment to sound educational principles, adequate democratic consultation processes, and realistic implementation planning that prioritises educational effectiveness over political timelines.

The stakes are too high for rushed implementation or inadequately considered change. New Zealand's young people deserve a qualification system designed with care, implemented with adequate support, and focused on their diverse strengths and future success rather than recreating traditional barriers that have historically excluded many from educational achievement.

Our critique emerges not from resistance to change, but from deep commitment to educational equity, professional sustainability, and democratic policy-making processes. We urge reconsideration of both the proposal's content and its implementation approach to ensure that changes genuinely serve educational improvement rather than political expedience.

Submitted on behalf of Te Kura Mātauranga | School of Education, Auckland University of Technology



PART A	5
OPEN AGENDA ITEM	

Council Agenda Paper

Subject: **VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT**

Date: **8 December 2025**

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT THE VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT BE RECEIVED.

SECTION 1. AUT'S CURRENT POSITION

1.1 Vice-Chancellor's introduction

The academic year has ended with our students completing final assessments and our teaching and support staff doing what they can to enable their success. The Blue Awards recognised high-performing student athletes and artists, while our New Zealand Sign Language teaching team were recognised with a national tertiary education award.

Partnerships and engagement have been a key focus with the successful 25 Year partnership dinner; increased international and alumni engagement during visits to the USA and China and AUT becoming the Exclusive University Partner of one of New Zealand's most exciting new sports teams, Auckland Football Club (AFC).

AUT's hosting of WIPCE 2025 – the World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education - is the culmination of years of work and a demonstration of bringing Te Aronui to life. The event has seen more than 3,800 participants from around Aotearoa and the world come together for the country's largest academic conference of the year.

The relaunch of AUT's brand under the 'Knowledge that Works' positioning statement made waves in the market and brought our university's unique positioning and offer to life.

Around 350 professional staff participated in this year's Navigate Staff Conference and were inspired by Dame Valerie Adams, Nadia Lim, Suzy Cato, and Ben Hurley.

AUT's research culture continues to thrive, despite challenges with funding uncertainty with the opening of the updated Cognitive and Computational Neuroscience laboratory and the launch of the AUT Social Transformation Research Institute. Our academics have been recognised in the 2025 Marsden Fund, the Mana Tūāpapa Fellowship, and the Nobel Sustainability Trust Awards.

The annual AUT Learning and Teaching Symposium included International AI in education expert Professor Sarah Eaton from the University of Calgary as the keynote speaker.

HIGHLIGHTS

- We celebrated 25 years as a university with the *Together for 25 – Poipoi* dinner bringing together 180 partners and collaborators. [Read more](#)
- AUT's Virtual Production Studio marked being open for business with a showreel of its unique offering. [Read more](#)
- Our Art and Design School students and staff had 53 winners at the annual Best Awards. [Read more](#)
- A commitment to empowering the Deaf community through allyship has earned AUT's New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) Team national recognition. [Read more](#)
- Lighting the Academy: Rainbow Research Symposium 2025 highlighted academic research from across New Zealand through 50 presentations. [Read more](#)
- AUT was front and centre at the China Annual Conference and Expo for International Education (CACIE) 2025. New Zealand was 'the Country of Honour' in the largest Chinese international education forum, and the Vice-Chancellor gave a keynote address to more than 4,500 policymakers, academics, and education leaders. [Read more](#)
- AUT hosted thousands of indigenous educators at the biggest academic conference in the history of Aotearoa - WIPCE 2025. [Read more](#)

SECTION 2. TE KETE | GRADUATES THE WORLD NEEDS

University highlights, activities, and updates on our initiatives to enhance student success under Te Kete.

2.1 Academic Transformation

AUT Online continues to perform ahead of projections. The Certificate of Proficiency “Practical Applications of Applied AI” successfully launched on 3 November with 45 enrolments, exceeding the 30-student target.

All five new 2026 programmes, the Master of Applied AI, Master of Digital Transformation Leadership, Master of Creative Innovation and Technology, Master of Applied Psychology, and Master of Human Performance Leadership, have been approved by CUAP.

A programme-by-programme implementation of the Assessment Policy with a focus on AI in assessment is underway. This takes a whole of programme view with assessments falling within two channels – Channel 1 being secure and not using AI and all other assessments falling into Channel 2, where regular points of observation of learning are built in and contribute to the final grade for the assessment.

In addition, the Office of Learning Teaching and Educational Design (LTED) is holding regular workshops (called “AI in Assessment Challenge”) which are open to all academic staff.

A vendor for the work integrated learning software has been selected, and preparation is underway to implement the software in 2026, beginning with Nursing and progressively rolling out across the rest of the University.

Work continues to develop our new Graduate Profile - the compass that shapes every student's journey through AUT. It defines what it means to be an AUT graduate and guides how we design and connect learning, research, support, and partnership experiences across the University.

2.2 Student Success

Several initiatives were put in place for those programmes under the umbrella of the Pathway Diplomas Project in semester 1 2025:

- A more prescriptive approach to the courses students could take in their first semester so that a cohort approach could be maintained in all programmes.
- Inclusion of the Uni101 course in all the Pathway Diplomas and additional mentoring and student support as part of Uni 101.
- Linking students with an advisor from Student Services, the Office of Pacific Advancement or Office of Māori Advancement.

The results in Semester 1 showed improvements on the previous year for the programmes included in the project:

- The Dip Bus overall course completion rate for Semester 1 improved from 75% in 2024 to 80% in 2025 with a 19% increase in the course completion rate for Pacific students.
- The overall course completion rate for the Dip Arts (Comms) increased from 60% in 2024 to 74% in 2025.
- The Diploma of Arts - which for the first time introduced Uni101 and restricted choice so that a cohort could be maintained - saw a 22% increase in course completion rates overall (from 49% in 2024 to 76% in 2025) and a 32% increase in course completion rates for Pacific students.

2.3 Innovative and Technology-Enabled Teaching and Learning

The second annual Learning and Teaching Symposium was on 25 and 26 November. The theme was *University of Technology and Opportunity* and more than 40 staff presented. International AI in education expert Professor Sarah Eaton, from the University of Calgary, was the keynote speaker.

Students are now able to record and maintain their preferred pronouns, via the MyAUT student portal. Student pronouns are also visible in both Canvas and the CRM systems. From December, applicants can specify their preferred pronouns when applying online on the AUT Website.

The Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) has approved an initiative to ensure automated recording of lectures in line with our commitments under the Disability Action Plan, with plans to present to the Academic Board. There is an anticipated rollout for Semester 1, 2026.

2.4 Equity and Inclusion

Delivery continues across the 33 initiatives of the Disability Action Plan with strong progress and a visible impact already being achieved for staff and students. Fourteen initiatives are now complete and already contributing to change, eighteen are in progress with strong momentum, and one initiative is on hold pending data changes before it can resume.

Student Services and Administration collaborated with the Office of Māori Advancement to deliver a *Scholarships CV* workshop for students, and a *CV for Work* session took place with the Office of Pacific Advancement.

To celebrate Te Wiki o te Reo Māori, Student Communications launched a targeted campaign featuring a themed all-student newsletter that had a 76.6% open rate.

A new Learning Assessment Service has been designed and developed by Disability Support Student Advisors, with the aim to provide streamlined, timely and equitable access to specific learning disability (SLD) assessments for students without existing diagnoses.

A Rainbow Mentorship program, a three-month initiative, has been developed to empower and support AUT's LGBTQIA+ (Rainbow) students by connecting them with mentors from both the industry and the AUT community who identify as part of this community or as allies. The

programme provides a safe and supportive space for students to build confidence, gain professional insights, and grow their networks.

The 2025 Student Support Fund Staff Campaign contribution to the overall funds raised for Student Support YTD is \$79,000.

SECTION 3. TE KETE | KNOWLEDGE DISCOVERY AND APPLICATION WITH PURPOSE

University highlights, activities, and updates on our progress in fostering impactful and innovative research, learning, teaching, and technology, as guided by Te Kete.

3.1 Research transformation

The procurement process for a research data repository has been completed, and Catalyst + D-Space has been identified as the preferred provider.

Approvals for research that have received ethics approval from a Health and Disability Ethics Committee (HDEC) will no longer need to be considered by AUTEK.

3.2 Building Research Activity

The Graduate Research School continues to support 895 active doctoral students, 47 active MPhil students. 43 Doctoral students are in examinations. Two pilot programmes have been completed: *12 Weeks to Research Active* and *Te Ara Whakamua: Navigating our Doctoral Futures* and PG Writers' Retreat took place in November.

We have celebrated the opening of the updated Cognitive and Computational Neuroscience laboratory and the launch of the AUT Social Transformation Research Institute.

Associate Prof Jack Chen has been awarded an MBIE Applied Doctoral Scholarship under the first round of these new awards. Awards are made to research proposals and recipients identify a suitable student.

3.3 Adapting to Emerging Technologies

A project is underway focusing on guidance for AI tools that meet the specific needs of postgraduate students, supporting them to navigate the ethical and practical aspects of using AI tools in research, leading to improved research quality and integrity.

AUT is participating in ten of the Phase 1 proposals submitted to MBIE's AI Research Platform RFP.

Draft Guidelines for the Ethical Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Research have been approved by the Research Committee of Academic Board and are now being finalised.

Te Kāhui Poipoi Rangahau (the Research Office) is trialling an AI agent to significantly reduce the time researchers spend drafting funding proposals and improve the quality of bids and compliance with funder guidelines.

3.4 Research Impact and Success

Professor Alice Theadom (FHES) and the Brain Injury Screening Tool Development Group were awarded the HRC Bevan Medal for developing a free clinical tool to help clinicians identify people who are at risk of a poor recovery following a mild traumatic brain injury.

In October, AUT staff were awarded two RSNZ Mana Tūāpapa Future Leader Fellowships and two Marsden fund awards:

- Dr Hazel Abraham (DCT) was awarded a Mana Tūāpapa Future Leader Fellowship for her proposal “Te Ara Matihiko: Shaping digital futures using Generative Reo Māori AI models based on intergenerational storytelling”.
- Dr Cate Ryan (FHES) was awarded a Mana Tūāpapa Future Leader Fellowship for her proposal “Initiating New Zealand's Red List of Ecosystems: Using Coastal Active Dunes”.
- Professor Sebastian Leuzinger (FHES) won a Marsden Standard Award for his proposal “A novel, multidisciplinary approach to characterising the transport of fluids in trees”.
- Professor Helena Cooper-Thomas (BEL) won a Marsden Standard Award for her proposal “Relational reciprocity: learning from values-led organisations and their members to inform”.

Dr. Boda Ning (DCT) and Prof Valery Feigin (FHES) were named as Highly Cited Researchers (HCR) for 2025 by Clarivate. Only 12 New Zealand researchers received this recognition in 2025.

SECTION 4. TE KETE | PARTNERSHIPS THAT ACCELERATE IMPACT

University highlights, activities and updates on our partnerships and engagements as outlined in Te Kete.

4.1 Advancing Education on the Global Stage

The Pro Vice-Chancellor Pacific travelled to Fiji earlier this month to connect with regional stakeholders, representing AUT and the Moanaroa Pacific Research Network in meetings with the United Nations Pacific Development team, University of South Pacific, iTaukei Affairs and Pacific Islands Universities Regional Network. Professor Matapo also presented at Pasifika Communities University. All stakeholders expressed interest in deepening the relationship with AUT, and potential collaborations will be considered as part of the Pacific Plan development process.

Successful alumni events were held in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, and Beijing, bringing graduates together to celebrate the impact of our alumni and share expertise and experience.

AUT was a lead organisation at the China Annual Conference and Expo for International Education (CACIE) 2025 where New Zealand was the country of honour. The Vice-Chancellor gave the keynote address to more than 4,500 policymakers, academics, and education leaders.

4.2 Government & Civic Engagement

Dr David Wilson (NZ First) was taken on a tour of our South Campus to show him our facilities and discuss tertiary sector issues. We also hosted Labour's climate change spokesperson Dr Deborah Russell with faculty from Department of Environmental Science to discuss climate change policy.

AUT hosted Prime Minister, Hon Christopher Luxon and Minister for Tourism, Hon Louise Upston at our School of Hospitality and Tourism for the announcement that New Zealand restaurants will feature in the prestigious Michelin Guide. They toured our kitchens and met some of our students and staff.

AUT's humanoid robots were introduced to the Minister of Finance, Hon Nicola Willis; the Minister of Ethnic Communities, Hon Mark Mitchell; and the Associate Minister of Defence, Hon Chris Penk at the AUT sponsored Ethnic Xchange Symposium.

The recently appointed Chief Science Advisor Dr John Roche visited our campus to learn about our institutions, meet researchers and to discuss the government's science system changes.

The Vice-Chancellor and Rt Hon Helen Clark, former Prime Minister of New Zealand, hosted the Hon Malcolm Turnbull AC, former Prime Minister of Australia, for a conversation on leadership in challenging times.

A wide range of politicians were hosted at WIPCE (the World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education).

AUT's School of Education hosted the Estonian Minister of Education, Kristina Kallas and the Minister of Education, Hon Erica Stanford. Estonia, one of the world's most advanced digital societies, has launched the [AI Leap 2025](#) (TI-Hüpe 2025) programme, an ambitious nationwide artificial intelligence education initiative.

AUT hosted a delegation of National Party Members of Parliament for a tour of the City Campus, including an introduction to AUT's new humanoid robots. The visit showcased AUT's research strengths in robotics, structural engineering, and smart sensing systems, and highlighted AUT's contribution to regional and national economic development.

Work continues with the Student Experience Partnership Working Group, which is led by AUT and has the goal of improving student life in the CBD.

AUT and AUTSA are pleased to note that after prolonged advocacy, Auckland Transport has doubled the Tertiary discount from 20% to 40%. Advocacy around further goals continue.

4.3 Iwi Relationships

Ngāti Whātua was the Tangata Whenua co-host with AUT for the 2025 WIPCE. This partnership was very visibly on display as the conference opened with a powhiri led by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei (with over 3000 manuhiri) and a procession up Queen St to Aotea Square led by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei toa.

AUT continues to strengthen relationships with all mana whenua and iwi connected to our campuses, including Ngāti Paoa, Te Kawerau a Maki, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, Waikato Tainui, and Te Ahiwaru. All five-iwi attended WIPCE as VIPs and their presence reflected our shared commitment to advancing Māori educational aspirations and maintaining strong, enduring partnerships.

Ngāti Paoa's Treaty settlement was signed into law on 5 November 2025. Several AUT staff, including the Vice-Chancellor, supported or were present at parliament.

The AUT Partnerships Dinner brought together key iwi partners to reaffirm our relationships and shared goals. Ngāti Paoa leadership and Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei attended.

4.4 University-Industry Collaboration

Partnering with Auckland Startup Week 2025 (SUW), brought hundreds of founders, innovators, investors and partners together for a festival of events designed to inspire, challenge, and connect.

A co-hosted event with the Trans-Tasman Business Circle (TTBC), for representatives from Auckland's business, cultural and sporting communities, saw the powerful story of Auckland FC's rapid rise to success with CEO, Nick Becker, and Director of Football, Terry McFlynn.

4.5 Community Partnerships

Sponsorship of the 2025 Ethnic Xchange Symposium provided the opportunity to engage with and introduce our humanoid robots to ethnic business leaders, entrepreneurs, and government officials.

An innovative partnership with The King's Trust, Ara Tipu, is supporting the university's entrepreneurs with training, mentoring, and funding for their business or idea.

The Vice-Chancellor was recognised by New Zealand's Indian community as a recipient of the 2025 Raman Ranchod Commemoration Award—for Services to Education and International Education with India.

4.6 AUT Foundation

In the YTD to September, the Foundation secured \$1.4 million in philanthropic support — evidence of growing confidence in AUT's vision and the Foundation's role in enabling this vision.

4.7 International

To elevate AUT's global presence and expand its partnership network, a new study abroad agreement was signed with Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), and another with ICN Business School establishing more pipelines for French, German, and United States students.

Two AUT students will attend a 6-week programme hosted by IIT Delhi and facilitated by IndoGenius. This is part of a joint NZ Centre Prime Minister's Scholarship for the Asia group programme.

The Honorary Consul of Nepal, Mr Dinesh Khadka, visited AUT, met with the AVC Engagement and the Director of the International Office to discuss opportunities, and engaged with our Nepali student community.

His Excellency Sonam Tobgay, Ambassador of Bhutan, visited the AVC Engagement.

SECTION 5. TE KETE | OUR OFFER AND APPROACH

University highlights and updates on activities related to our positioning in the market as a university of technology and opportunity

5.1 Technology-Driven Innovation in Learning and Engagement

Comprehensive guidelines are being developed for building and testing Generative AI powered agents. By harnessing the capabilities of generative AI, the initiative seeks to maximize innovation while addressing and mitigating associated risks.

5.2 Domestic Brand Position, Marketing and Recruitment Activities

September and October were defining months for AUT's brand evolution, marked by the launch of *Knowledge That Works* - a bold, refreshed identity that amplifies AUT's reputation for practical learning and impactful research. This milestone campaign, led by Brand and Marketing Services, was rolled out across digital, physical, and media channels, reinforcing AUT's distinctive positioning in the tertiary sector.

The division also introduced a new digital tone of voice, launched an AI writing assistant to support brand-aligned content, and redesigned the AUT homepage to reflect the university's forward-thinking ethos.

The debut of the "Hey, did you know?" podcast and expansion of Bionic Chat to 75 webpages further demonstrated AUT's commitment to innovative communications and student engagement.

Recruitment activities continued to reflect AUT's unique value proposition. Marketing automation efforts surged, with a 42% increase in email deployments and strong engagement metrics. Domestic enquiries remained high, with course counselling appointments up 79% year-on-year. Schools' outreach wrapped up with impactful activities across campuses, reinforcing AUT's distinctive approach to student recruitment and community connection.

5.3 Global Brand Position and Marketing Activities

International AUT's global positioning has been advanced through targeted campaigns and strategic planning. The China campaign delivered strong results via *Douyin* (Chinese TikTok) and syndicated media, while optimisations in the India campaign improved conversion rates (from lead to application) and lead quality. The draft International Marketing Plan and lead forecasting for 2026 signal a proactive approach to global recruitment.

To strengthen AUT's global brand positioning, BMS kicked off a project that has gathered insights from stakeholder interviews and strategic discussions to inform the development of a comprehensive international narrative. This will refine and optimise the delivery of AUT's core messages to international prospects and influencers across key markets.

SECTION 6. TE KETE | OUR PLACE, OUR PEOPLE AND OUR CULTURE

Highlights and updates on activities related to the University's operations.

6.1 Sustainability

An audit of AUT's sorted waste to landfill identified key opportunities to divert more waste, including textile recycling within the School of Art and Design and construction and demolition waste recycling within WS & WZ buildings.

A biodiversity workshop with key AUT academics, Estates, and sustainability teams established AUT biodiversity targets as well as opportunities for greater collaboration with School of Science students on campus.

Green Impact awards were held and five teams achieved platinum (highest level of recognition requiring a team to complete actions worth 600 points). In 2025, more than double the number of actions were completed this year compared with 2024.

6.2 Library and Learning Support

Te Mātāpuna Library & Learning Services is representing AUT's voice in consortium licensing negotiations with major publishers, working with universities across New Zealand and Australia through the Council of Australasian University Librarians (CAUL). Securing better deals is the shared objective and key priorities include fair access, transparency, and better value for public investment in research.

Negotiations have successfully concluded with three of the four publishers: Springer Nature, Wiley and Taylor & Francis.

A disappointing offer from Elsevier has been rejected as it does not reflect key priorities of New Zealand and Australian universities. AUT's current CAUL Elsevier journal agreement (ScienceDirect) expires on 31 December 2025 and there will be no CAUL contract in place with Elsevier for ScienceDirect in 2026.

Te Mātāpuna is preparing contingencies for AUT, in alignment with CAUL, to best support student learning and research and to minimise any disruption.

6.3 Leadership and Development

Aronui Ora, AUT's flagship professional development programme designed to bring our Te Aronui Te Tiriti Framework to life has achieved significant milestones, including:

- More than 105 kaimahi have fully completed Aronui Ora, earning recognition for their commitment to AUT's Tiriti obligations. Feedback highlights its transformative impact, describing the programme as energizing and deeply connecting.
- Digital Innovation: Enhancement of TupuKupu.com - a Progressive Web App originally envisioned by Valance Smith, supports language and cultural learning, ensuring scalability and accessibility for staff. We are currently exploring how to digitally integrate the app into Aronui Ora, in particular the Tupukupu module.

AUT partnered with Indigenous Growth Ltd (IGL) to host Te Tihi Tapu, a two-day summit (10 - 11 November 2025) bringing together Māori and Pacific alumni and leaders to wānanga Māori leadership and transformative change.

Development opportunities delivered include Neurodivergent Team Support sessions, Aspire Leadership Development Programme, Intentional Leadership, and Conversations that Matters for our Heads of School and Heads of Department.

A succession planning process has been formally initiated with the first phase focusing on assessing leadership depth, readiness, and turnover risk to provide a foundation for a university-wide talent and capability strategy in 2026 and beyond.

6.4 Culture and People

During September and October, work continued to embed Thriving People, Thriving Future (the People Plan 2025–2030) across the organisation through targeted presentations, staff sessions, and communications. Work progressed on the development of a KPI framework to track progress against the 12 People Plan objectives, with draft measures presented to the P&C Committee for feedback.

Significant progress is being made on the redesign of AUT's performance and development framework that will shift the focus from compliance and annual cycles to ongoing, meaningful conversations linking individual performance, development, and wellbeing with organisational priorities.

The Navigate Professional Staff Conference was well received by the 350 staff who participated with key speakers receiving an overall favourable score of 89% and very positive feedback about the event.

6.5 Spaces and Places

A wide range of project proposals have been approved which will enable AUT to offer enhanced student and staff experience (AL, WF 8-10, WD refurbishments), mitigate risk (WO) and enhance AUT's reputation as a university of technology and opportunity.

Significant support has been provided to the Te Ara Haumuru (Science safety and compliance programme), notably in respect of procuring works to convert part of WS6 to PC1 status.

More than 4,300 work orders were addressed by the facilities management team in September and October and the additional focus has been the commissioning of numerous disruptive capital asset renewals works for the summer break.

6.6 Enterprise and Service

Estates Commercial Services delivered 196 events during the reporting period attended by over 16,799 guests (99 events more than the same period last year).

September and October saw 176 catering deliveries prepared for 3,668 guests, and 73,146 customers served in the Retail outlets.

A special highlight was the hosting of the Tertiary ICT Conference at AUT.



PART A	6
OPEN AGENDA ITEM	

Council Agenda Paper

Subject: Chancellor's Report

Date: 8 December 2025

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT COUNCIL RECEIVE THE CHANCELLOR'S VERBAL REPORT



PART A OPEN AGENDA ITEM	7.1
--	------------

Council Agenda Paper

Subject: Report from Academic Board

Date: 27 October 2025

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT COUNCIL RECEIVE THE ACADEMIC BOARD REPORT AND MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER AND 24 NOVEMBER 2025.

The minutes are in supplementary papers.

Academic Board Report to Council

Meeting held 29 September 2025

Strategic Matters and Policy Developments

- **University Advisory Group (UAG) and draft Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) update**

The Vice-Chancellor provided a brief summary of the main points from the UAG report and the associated cabinet paper. The cabinet paper indicates that a large number of the recommendations will not be acted upon although it does refer to the replacement for PBRF and the issue of academic governance. Overall the Government has made it clear it does not support disruptive changes. A Universities Strategy Group is to be established which will be chaired by the Minister and comprise independent experts, senior government officials and a small number of Vice-Chancellors. This group will set priorities and be integrated with the Prime Minister's Science and Information Technology Advisory Council.

- **Research implications of the UAG and draft TES**

Professor Orams outlined the UAG outcomes in relation to research. From 2027 PBRF will be retitled Tertiary Research Excellence Fund (TREF). Whilst the TREF retains most of the PBRF model, the quality evaluation process will be fundamentally different. Measurement will be at the institutional level based on a field weighted citation index. A Technical Advisory Group (TAG) has been established to provide recommendations on the citation index to the Minister by the end of 2025. The University is about to trial SciVal which is one of the systems being considered by TAG and the Tertiary Education Commission for recording institutional field weighted citations.

Comments from Academic Board members included: research is becoming increasingly multi-disciplinary and therefore it is becoming more difficult to differentiate unique fields; no consultation is possible with TAG however Professor Emeritus K McPherson is the chair and Associate Professor J Matapo is a member albeit not as a representative of AUT as such; the University may need to embed some protection and valuing of research that does not generate citations; and, contribution to research such as editing collections of chapters and contributions to research culture does not appear to be catered for under the TREF.

Committees of Academic Board

- The following recommendation from the **Programme Approval and Review Committee** was approved.
Academic Board approved submission to CUAP of the following Graduating Year Review report:
Master of Sport, Exercise and Health, Postgraduate Certificate in Sport, Exercise and Health

Other - nil

Academic Board Report to Council

Meeting held 24 November 2025

Strategic Matters and Policy Developments

- **Research Ethics Transformation Project**

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research outlined progress on the project to date. This included: a minor restructure of the Research Ethics Office; changes to AUTECH membership; and changes to administrative processes now that researchers with approval via the Health and Disabilities Ethics Committee no longer need AUTECH approval. An overview of the following next steps was provided: a trial of a research ethics review forum within the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences (FHES) in the first half of 2026; a trial of separate pathways for Māori and Pacific research later in 2026; and, development of a GenAI agent to support research ethics applications. The volume and high risk level around health related proposals prompted the trial within FHES next year. Professor Cowan declared a potential conflict of interest given his membership on the Health Research Council and his role of Dean of FHES. Thanks were extended to those who have contributed to the project thus far.

Discussion raised the following points: issues with the online postgraduate research student management system being developed have resulted in an alternative now being considered; some faculty representatives on AUTECH have dual roles, also serving as advisors to ethics applicants; there is potential for challenges with ethics applicants being given different advice from a faculty member and a Research Ethics Consultant; and, liaison between Research Ethics Consultants and discipline experts may be required in some circumstances.

- **Publisher Negotiations**

The University Librarian provided an update on CAUL negotiations, noting success with three of the four major publishers in terms of improved conditions for open access as part of licensing agreements. CAUL negotiations with Elsevier have been paused. The current journal agreement (Science Direct) expires on 31 December and no contract will be in place for 2026. AUT's individual contracts with Elsevier (Scopus, ClinicalKey and ClinicalKey for Nursing) will continue in 2026. The Library team are working with the other New Zealand universities on contingencies such as the use of Interloan. Academic Board members were encouraged to refer to information on TUIA and to contact the information and research librarians for further advice.

Comments from Academic Board members included: factoring rising costs of publishing into research funding; individual academics' decisions around reviewing for Elsevier; and, potential long-term effects on student and academic staff careers as a result of decisions around who to submit to for publication.

Committees of Academic Board

- Academic Board **noted** the 2024 programme annual report for the Doctor of Philosophy.

Other - nil



Council Agenda Paper

Subject: Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report: September - November 2025

Date: 4 November 2025

From: Stephen Davies, Assistant Vice Chancellor People and Culture

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT COUNCIL RECEIVE THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING REPORT

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the current state of Health, Safety and Wellbeing at AUT and support Council's responsibilities for governance and oversight aligned with their duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

This report covers incidents reported in the period 18 September to 31 October 2025, with information and actions that have occurred or been reported over that period.

2. Council Action Item Response: Clarifying Divisional and Functional Responsibilities

Action Item:

Management to provide further information on how clarity between divisional and functional responsibilities will be resolved, as this was an issue raised through prior audits.

Response:

The Safety Pathway programme, Te Ara Haumaru, includes strategic initiatives designed to strengthen collaboration between faculties that share spaces and the divisions that support them; particularly central Health, Safety & Wellbeing (HSW) and Estates. These initiatives aim to:

- Clarify ownership of shared spaces.
- Confirm AUT's health and safety responsibilities in relation to subsidiaries and joint ventures.
- Enhance AUT-wide incident reporting.

Further initiatives will ensure earlier involvement of Health & Safety in key processes, such as the Capital Expenditure application and approval stages.

Work is also underway to improve visibility of incidents involving health and safety elements across digital platforms. This includes better integration between the Estates Service Desk and the AUT Incident

Reporting system. In addition, discussions are progressing with AUT's Security team to ensure that incidents with health, safety, or wellbeing components are appropriately escalated to central HSW.

Estates have scoped several projects for implementation during the upcoming Summer Operations period, targeting buildings WE, WH, WM, and AA. While health and safety risks have been identified in buildings WS and WN, structural limitations present challenges to fully resolving these issues.

To support clearer delineation between material health and safety matters and general building maintenance, Estates and central HSW are working towards closer collaboration. This includes improved communication, knowledge sharing, and a risk-based approach to addressing outstanding maintenance concerns.

3. Governance Knowledge and Awareness

Key developments in legislation, regulation, or guidance

The government has proposed reforms to the Health and Safety at Work Act (HSWA) expected to be legislated by early 2026. These reforms emphasise managing critical risks and reducing regulatory burdens for small, low risk businesses, which could affect university departments or services classified as low risk. This includes focusing only on critical risks that could cause death, serious injury, or illness and requiring basic workplace facilities like first aid kits and emergency plans.

Clarification between strategic governance (board/officers) and operational management responsibilities is being strengthened to reduce confusion and overcompliance, which is relevant for university council members as officers exercising due diligence.

Approved Codes of Practice (ACOPs) can now be developed by industries themselves with government approval, and compliance with these ACOPs is deemed compliance with HSWA. Universities may engage more in shaping such standards for their health and safety systems.

WorkSafe NZ is shifting its regulatory approach to prioritise early engagement, education, and targeted guidance rather than fear-based enforcement, aligning with calls for a more enabling and supportive regulator. This may affect how universities interact with WorkSafe in managing health and safety compliance.

Specific consultation is underway for changes to hazardous substances regulations aligned with practices in university laboratories, such as permitting flammable substance labs on upper floors for fire safety and security reasons, expected to be finalised by mid-2026.

Additional measures reduce landowner liability for injuries to recreational users on their land, transferring responsibility to the organisation conducting activities. This may impact university-owned recreational spaces or events.

These developments suggest the health and safety regulatory environment for New Zealand universities is evolving towards more practical, risk-focused, and partnership-driven compliance under HSWA, with significant implications for governance, operational risk management, and regulatory engagement.

4. Te Ara Haumaru Programme

The Safety Pathway programme continues to focus on delivering the 274 recommendations within scope. During the latest reporting period, key progress has been made across several workstreams:

- **Regulatory Compliance:** Administrative compliance activities have been finalised.

- **Building Maintenance Remedial Workstream:** Remedial work has commenced in laboratory spaces, supported by a comprehensive operational review. Each lab now has a documented list of required actions.
- **Safe Workplace, Safe Worker Workstream:** Health risk monitoring activities have concluded, with outcomes currently under review to determine next steps.

Estates has provided ongoing support for building-related works, with several projects scheduled for implementation during the upcoming summer operations period.

As outlined in the table below:

- **68 items (25%)** have been completed.
- **185 items** are currently in progress, with approximately **45%** of that work already advanced.
- A targeted effort is underway to reach **60% completion** by the end of 2025.

In the previous reporting period, 33 recommendations were identified as not yet started. Focused effort has since progressed this work, with only two Regulatory Compliance recommendations remaining outstanding:

1. **Biological Safety Officer Training:** Formal training for this role is currently unavailable within New Zealand's education sector. The programme will explore Australian-based training options in 2026.
2. **Legislative and Standards Awareness for Laboratory Managers and Technicians:** To address this, the central Health & Safety team will introduce a bi-monthly newsletter from early 2026, highlighting relevant legislative updates and industry changes.

These developments reflect measured progress and a proactive approach to resolving outstanding items, with continued alignment to strategic health and safety objectives.

Workstreams	Total Rec's	% of Rec's	Not Started	In Progress	Complete	Not Required	% Complete
Regulatory Compliance	130	47%	2	73	47	8	36%
Safe Workplace, Safe Worker	19	7%	0	19	0	0	0%
Risk Prevention & Control	52	19%	0	37	8	0	15%
Digital Solutions	19	7%	0	15	4	0	21%
Building Maintenance Remedial Work	37	14%	0	26	8	0	22%
Organisational Management	8	3%	0	6	1	0	13%
Strategic AUT wide Initiative/Future Strategic Planning	9	3%	0	9	0	0	0%
Totals	274		2	185	68	8	25%

5. Understanding AUT's Operations and Risk Landscape

Critical risk themes and trends

Between **September 19 and October 31, 2025**, a total of **43 health and safety incidents** were recorded across AUT. This represents a **decrease of 22 incidents (-33.8%)** compared with the **65 incidents** logged during the preceding six-week period.

The downward trend suggests improved hazard management and possibly seasonal or operational factors (semester break, fewer field activities, etc.). However, the distribution of incident types and statuses shows that risk exposure persists across several faculties.

Incidents by Faculty/Directorate

Faculty / Directorate	Current Period	Previous Period	Change	% Change
Health & Environmental Sciences	25	45	-20	-44%
Estates	4	6	-2	-33%
Design & Creative Technology	3	3	0	0%
Culture & Society	2	1	+1	+100%
ICT	2	0	+2	—
People & Culture	1	2	-1	-50%
Student Services & Administration	1	4	-3	-75%
Te Mātāpuna (Library & Learning Services)	1	1	0	0%
Business, Economics & Law	0	1	-1	-100%

Key insights

- Health & Environmental Sciences remains the highest-reporting area (25 incidents), though numbers dropped sharply (-44%).
- Estates continue to show moderate incident frequency, primarily from physical and security-related events.

Open Incidents

Overview

The focus for the next reporting period for the central HSW team is to support the faculties and directorates to close out open incidents greater than 28 days. There are currently 115 incidents open, of which 56 are older than 28 days.

Open Incidents by Faculty/Directorate

Faculty / Directorate	Open Incidents
Health & Environmental Sciences	44
Student Services and Administration	2
Design & Creative Technology	4
Estates	4
Vice Chancellor's Group	1
Business, Economics and Law	1

6. Risk Management Capability

HSW Assurance Programme

There are three current audits that HSW has responsibility or oversight for:

- Hazardous Substances Roles & Responsibilities (Internal Audit) – Recently completed with a draft report currently circulated for review.
- Hospitality Audit (Internal Audit) – in the last council report, Food Safety was identified as an HSW led audit. In agreement with AUT's assurance team, HSW will now align with the planned AUT internal audit focussing on the School of Hospitality and Tourism. Scope is broadly aligned, except for AUT run food outlets, which HSW will pick up as a separate audit in 2026.
- Transport Safety (HSW) – scope definition and vendor selection has commenced. This audit will be undertaken in early Q1 2026.

Independent Review

The HSW Executive Subgroup has initiated an independent review to understand whether there are any substantive health and safety issues relating to the School of Science following a paper sent from the central H&S team to leadership in the school which raised concerns. The School of Science leadership provided a comprehensive written response to the claims and discussed these with the Subgroup. The review will provide the Subgroup with advice relating to the paper and the response about any future actions/changes that need to be made.

Mandatory HSW All Staff Induction

HSW and Organisational Development are collaborating with ICT to rebuild the All Staff HSW Induction module within the Canvas platform. This redevelopment will ensure the module meets AUT's legal obligations by accurately capturing individual completion records. Additionally, the rebuild will incorporate insights from the recent proof of concept to enhance user experience and effectiveness.

The fully compliant module is scheduled for publication in early 2026. While the initial goal was to launch before the end of 2025 to strengthen health and safety awareness, it is considered that a comprehensive and compliant implementation at the start of the new year, when staff are refreshed and ready, will deliver a more impactful outcome.

7. Forward Outlook

Priorities and planned initiatives to February 2026

- Implementation of Chemical Inventory Management software
- Roll out of Safety Management System guidance for Executive responsibilities and Risk Management.
- Continued work under the Te Ara Haumarū programme to address H&S recommendations
- Renewed focus on the Strategic Initiatives in Te Ara Haumarū to address the structural contributors to non-compliance
- Implementation of H&S induction module, and revised framework for laboratory induction and training under the programme

8. Conclusion

The Te Ara Haumarū programme remains focused on delivering its full scope of work, driving meaningful operational change within the central Health, Safety & Wellbeing (HSW) team. These changes are designed to strengthen collaboration across portfolios and foster a more proactive and integrated health and safety culture at AUT.

To support the transition from programme delivery to sustained business-as-usual operations, recruitment is planned in the coming months to enhance team capacity. The tools, systems, and resources developed under Te Ara Haumarū will form the foundation of the team's future operating model.

9. Appendix 1 – Te Ara Hauamru high level timeframes & progress

Note 1: Inventory Management implementation in progress, but late due to vendor availability. Expected to be implemented between Nov -Jan

Note 2: The Organisational Management workstream is delayed due to HSW team changes, including the departure of the Director and Specialist who drafted the paper. This work will be prioritised in the new year with a H&S consultancy.





PART A

OPEN AGENDA ITEM

9

Council Agenda Paper

Subject: Te Toi Aronui Report

Date: 1 December 2025

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT COUNCIL RECEIVE THE TE TOI ARONUI REPORT

Report to Council

To	AUT Council
From	Professor Meihana Durie, Te Toi Aronui
Date	1 December 2025

WIPCE 2025

WIPCE 2025 has without doubt been the one of most significant and high profile events that the University has hosted since its history. The conference, which only takes place every 4 years, was last held in Aotearoa 20 years ago when it was hosted by Waikato, making this year's return to Aotearoa particularly special. There are many aspects of WIPCE 2025 that will long live in the hearts and minds of all those who participated and contributed, but perhaps most telling of all is the fact that all who attended reported on the event being a transformative, cathartic and in some cases live-changing experience. It is important to thank and acknowledge the magnificent contributions of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, and the continuous support of our Pro Chancellor Marama Royal. The partnership that AUT carries with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei has only grown stronger in the time that we have worked collaboratively on this project but moreso perhaps in recent weeks and days in the lead up to the Pōwhiri, and into the week itself. There were many moments through the entire week, such as the daily morning karakia, the welcome to the renowned Hokulea Waka, and the tuku of the WIPCE mauri itself during the closing ceremony, were the level of leadership and contribution to WIPCE by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei was a sight to behold.

I would like to acknowledge the support of our Chancellor, Rob Campbell, whose presence during each day of WIPCE helped enabled our many manuhiri to get a sense of what the Te Aronui kaupapa means to AUT and how it engages the wider AUT whānau, including members of Council. It would be remiss to not also recognise the outstanding leadership of fellow Co-Chair, Vice Chancellor Professor Damon Salesa and in particular for reminding all international manuhiri to Aotearoa, that Tāmaki Makaurau is a city like no other in the world whereby we are honoured to have the largest Pacific population in the world. It is also important to honour the leadership and invaluable contributions of our WIPCE Co-Chairs, Dr Noenoe Wong-Wilson and Dr Bentham Ohia.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the incredible oversight and management expertise of colleagues Colleen Leauanae and Torise Flay, who brought WIPCE 2025 together to be not only the biggest WIPCE yet, but the biggest ever academic conference to have ever taken place in Aotearoa, certainly no small feat in the bigger scheme of things. Through their hard work and dedication, we are able to firmly share just how much of a success their methodical planning has been

The inherent benefits of hosting such a prestigious and truly international event on the Indigenous calendar will be felt for many years to come. Perhaps, however, one of the most impactful benefits for AUT, resides within the new partnerships, by way of teaching, research and leadership, that will continue to emerge and come about with other Indigenous scholars, institutions, communities and nations as we begin to transition into a new period of what I best describe as the age of The Age of Trans-Indigenisation. We have before us an opportunity to further amplify the centrality of Indigenous Scholarship in ways that will bring about an inherently positive impact upon the world at large, alongside humanity, society and the environment.

Māori Strategic Update

A major strategic focus presently revolves around how best to convert the potential of Māori and Scholarship into positive, sustainable and impactful outcomes that reflect the nature of our shared existence. It is expected that the new draft Māori Strategy will be ready to launch in early 2026. It is also clear that Māori leadership is diverse by nature, and that there is a particular fluidity to it – and so it is important that AUT continuously reflects that sheer depth and diversity. Through the promotion of Māori leadership across multiple fields of endeavour, AUT students will stand to be the beneficiaries of that work.

Nāku noa

Professor Meihana Durie

Te Toi Aronui



PART A OPEN AGENDA ITEM	13.1
--	-------------

Council Agenda Paper

Subject: Update from the President of AUTSA – Alicia Lemmer

Date: 8 December 2025

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT COUNCIL RECEIVE THE VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF AUTSA



PART A	13.2
OPEN AGENDA ITEM	

Council Agenda Paper

Subject: Update from the Council Member Elected by Academic Staff – Welby Ings

Date: 8 December 2025

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT COUNCIL RECEIVE THE VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE COUNCIL MEMBER ELECTED BY THE ACADEMIC STAFF OF THE AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



PART A	13.3
OPEN AGENDA ITEM	

Council Agenda Paper

Subject: Update from the Council Member Elected by Professional Staff – Lani Thomson

Date: 8 December 2025

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT COUNCIL RECEIVE THE VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE COUNCIL MEMBER ELECTED BY THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF THE AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



Council Agenda Paper

Subject: **Sustainability Update – International Students’ Air Travel Emissions**

Date: **2nd December, 2025**

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT COUNCIL RECEIVES THE DECEMBER 2025 SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE RELATING TO EMISSIONS FROM INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS’ AIR TRAVEL AND STAFF AIR TRAVEL.

REPORT BY: LUCY MCKENZIE, HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY, STRATEGY AND PLANNING

Background and Summary

This paper responds to a Council request for a follow up from the September sustainability update. It covers carbon emissions from international students and staff travel.

Key Executive Decision & Discussion Points

Executive discussed a proposed model (and its underpinning assumptions) at its November meeting. There was general agreement that we should measure and report on CO₂e emissions associated with international students’ travel to Auckland for their studies at AUT. These emissions come within AUT’s operational control and provide impetus to implement initiatives to manage the emissions. There was a lot of discussion about the assumptions underpinning such a model and Executive asked for further work to be undertaken to estimate international student emissions.

Executive also noted the following principles:

- That we should only include those emissions associated with their need to travel to NZ to undertake their studies at AUT.
- That we should not include those emissions associated with decisions these international students make to do personal travel (e.g. to go back home to visit family, or travel within NZ etc) because this travel is discretionary and not required as part of their study (and AUT has no ability to directly influence this).
- We will review models that other universities use to calculate CO₂e associated with international student travel and benchmark against these (so we at least know how the model we propose to use compares with others).
- Options for managing or reducing these emissions will be considered in the Sustainability and Regenerative Action Plan.

Some key discussion points from the Executive meeting were around:

- Tension points between financial and environmental sustainability;
- Managing emissions from international students now and in the future;
- Refining the model and assumptions (this will enable better annual reporting);
- AUT’s aspiration to be net zero carbon and the financial implications of offsetting; and
- Utilising principles in Te Kete, (and AUT’s values Pono, Tika and Aroha) to make decisions that are complex with no one easy solution

Staff Air Travel

Emissions from staff air travel are calculated based on air travel that is booked through Orbit, our air travel provider. This includes air travel that is domestic and international. Bookings through Orbit includes air travel that is paid for by AUT, as well as air travel paid for through external research grants. In some instances, students' air travel is included in the staff air travel CO₂e emissions and this is where a postgraduate student is undertaking research as part of their postgraduate programme, or to participate in a sports competition where they represent AUT. The latter is generally domestic travel, so produces minimal emissions.

AUT's emissions from air travel have been increasing since the borders re-opened. Executive approved the introduction of air travel carbon budgets to faculties and divisions. A pilot project with the Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies begins in early 2026. This will introduce carbon budgets and improve the approval system for air travel. The pilot aims to elicit a greater level of personal responsibility around staff undertaking air travel, as well as maximizing value for AUT and staff when they travel. Upon completion of the pilot, the intention is to introduce carbon budgets across AUT.