University Enhancement Theme Final Reports
August 2020

He whakarāpopototanga

Mai i te marama o Hepetema, 2017, tae noa ki te marama o Māehe, 2020, i aro atu ngā whare wānanga o Aotearoa ki tētahi 'kaupapa whakamarohi' – "Ko ngā ara e whai pānga ai, e whai hua ai, e whanake ake ai anō hoki ngā ākonga Māori, me ngā ākonga Pasifika" - hei wāhanga o te hurihanga tuaono o te arotakenga mātauranga mō ngā whare wānanga. Nā tēnā, nā tēnā whare wānanga ōna anō whāinga me tāna anō mahere i whakarite i te tīmatanga o te tau 2018, ā, i whakapuakitia ngā kauneke me ngā taero i ngā hui a te Kāhui Ārahi mō te Kaupapa Whakamarohi i tū i waenga i te tau 2018 me te marama o Māehe 2020.

Ko tā tēnei pūrongo he wāhi whakamārama i ngā kaupapa whakamarohi i kōkirihia e ngā whare wānanga, otirā, kua whakarōpūtia e ai anō ki ngā kaupapa nei:
- ko ngā kaupapa e aro ana ki te whai pānga me te whakawhitinga ki te whare wānanga.
- ko ngā kaupapa mō te puritanga, mō te whai hua anō hoki e aronui ana ki te tauira, tae ana ki ērā kaupapa i tōia mai ai ngā hapori me hoa haere kē atu.
- ko ngā kaupapa mō te puritanga, mō te whai hua anō hoki e hāngai pū ana ki te whare wānanga, tae ana ki te marautanga, ki te ako, ki ngā kaupapa mō te whakawhanake ako me ngā wāhi ako hei tautoko i te mātauranga Māori, ki ngā pūkenga me te māia ki ngā āhuatanga kākano rua, me te arotau hei kaimahi.

E whai wāhi atu ana ki ngā pūrongo a ngā whare wānanga ko ngā arotakenga tuatahi o te angitu, o ngā pānga rānei. Ka whakamāramahia e ngā whare wānanga ngā kauneke i te whakaūnga o ā rātou mahere mō te kaupapa whakamarohi i ā rātou pūrongo arotake whaiaro mō te wāhanga arotake o te Hurihanga Tuaono.

Ka whai wāhi hoki ki tēnei pūrongo ko ētahi huritao e pā ana ki te kaupapa whakamarohi tonu. Ehara i te mea i puta i te kaupapa whakamarohi ētahi kaupapa hou inā hoki ko te nuinga he mahi whakawhanake i ētahi kaupapa kua whakaritea kētia. Heoi anō, nāna i arohia ai, otirā, i whakahoahoatia ai ngā mea matua, ngā kaupapa me ngā kauneke i roto i ngā whare wānanga, i waenganui anō i a rātou.

I kitea hoki ētahi taero i ngā huritao mō te kaupapa whakamarohi. E whai wāhi ana ki ēnei:
- ko te tō mai i te hunga i tua atu i ērā e whai wāhi pū ana ki te kaupapa whakamarohi.
- ko te poto o te wā, mā reira pea e uaua ake ai te whakaatu i ngā kauneke i ngā mahere kaupapa whakamarohi i te wāhanga arotake.
- ko te whakatau mēnā rānei mā te tō mai i ētahi anō mātanga ki ngā marau, mā te whakawhānui i ngā ara e whai pānga ai ki ngā pūkenga ārahi ā-ahurea, mā te whai hononga hoki ki ētahi atu hōtaka mahi matua, e tūpono pakari ake ai te kaupapa whakamarohi.
- ko te whakaae e herea ana ngā kaupapa i roto i ngā whare wānanga e ngā tūāhuatanga ā-pāpori e hāngai ana ki te taumahatanga – he āhuatanga waiwai, he āhuatanga matatini, otirā he āhuatanga kua toka.

- ko te whakapuaki i ngā kōrero e hāngai ana ki te mana taurite, ki te whai hua anō hoki o ētahi atu kāhui ākonga mā te aro tonu ki ngā ākonga Māori me ngā ākonga Pasifika. Ki te 'tika' te wāhi ki ngā ākonga Māori me ngā ākonga Pasifika, ka whai hua ko ngā ākonga katoa.
- ko ngā tanuku i waenga i te whakanui i ngā kauneke me ngā hua, me te whakaae arā tonu ētahi taero nui e tika ana kia arohia.

E ai ki ngā huritao a ngā ākonga, ko ngā reo o ngā ākonga tētahi wāhanga o te tukanga whakatau i uaratia, ā, ko te Kaupapa Whakamarohi tētahi tauira pai o te mahi ngātahi. "Ehara i te mea he tatauranga noa ō mātou tauira. He tāngata mātou, ā, ko ō mātou whānau, ko ō mātou hapū, ko ō mātou iwi e haere ngātahi nei ki a mātou i te ara o te whare wānanga."

Summary

From September 2017 to March 2020, New Zealand universities were engaged in an 'enhancement theme' — "Access, outcomes and opportunities for Māori students and for Pasifika students" — as part of the sixth Cycle of academic audit for universities. Each university developed its own objectives and plan at the start of 2018 and reported on both progress and challenges at Enhancement Theme Steering Group meetings over the 2018 to March 2020 period.

This report provides an overview of the enhancement theme initiatives undertaken by universities, broadly grouped into:
- initiatives concerned with access and transition to university
- student-focussed retention and outcomes initiatives, including initiatives that engaged communities and other partners
- university-centric retention and outcomes initiatives including curriculum, teaching and learning, teaching development and teaching space initiatives to support Mātauranga Māori, bi-cultural competence and confidence, and employability.

The reports from universities include initial assessments of success or impact. Universities will report on progress in addressing their enhancement theme plans in their self-review reports for the audit phase of Cycle 6.

This report also provides reflections on the enhancement theme itself. The enhancement theme itself did not generate new initiatives as it built mainly upon existing work. However, it has provided a mechanism for focusing on and sharing priorities, initiatives and progress both within and between universities.

Reflections on the enhancement theme also identified challenges. These include:
- gaining engagement beyond those immediately involved in the enhancement theme.
- relatively short timeframes which might make it difficult to demonstrate progress on enhancement theme plans in the audit phase.
- whether involving more subject experts, increasing access to cultural leadership and making connections to other major workstreams could have strengthened the enhancement theme.
- acknowledgement that initiatives within universities are limited by underlying, complex and entrenched, social issues of disadvantage.
- articulating narratives addressing equity and benefit for other groups of students through maintaining a focus on Māori students and Pasifika students. 'Getting it right' for Māori students and Pasifika students will have benefits for all students.
- tension between recognising progress and gains made while acknowledging that significant challenges still exist and need to be addressed.

Student reflections recognised that student voice(s) had been a valued part of the decision-making process and the Enhancement Theme has provided a good model of partnership. "Our Tauira are more than statistics, we are people with whānau, hapu and iwi walking alongside us and our journey through University".

Introduction

From September 2017 to March 2020, New Zealand universities were engaged in an 'enhancement theme' - "Access, outcomes and opportunities for Māori students and for Pasifika students" - as part of the sixth Cycle of academic audit for universities. Although the enhancement theme is part of the audit cycle, the theme is led and undertaken by universities and reports to the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors Committee (NZVCC) (ETSG, 2017).

Each university developed their own objectives and plan at the start of 2018 for the enhancement theme and a summary of these was developed in July 2018 and is available on the enhancement New Zealand Universities Enhancement Theme website – https://www.enhanceunz.com/.

The summary of university enhancement theme plans identified some common aspects:
- All university enhancement theme plans and initiatives were framed by university strategies and all provided indicators that would be used to gauge success.
- Most universities specified an internal steering group and included (or intended to include) students as members of those steering groups.

Initiatives could be broadly grouped into:
- Those concerned with access and transition to university and most universities included at least one access and transition initiative in their enhancement theme plan.
- Student-focussed retention and outcomes initiatives, including initiatives that engaged communities and other partners.
- University-centric retention and outcomes initiatives including curriculum, teaching and learning, teaching development and teaching space initiatives to support Mātauranga Māori, bi-cultural competence and confidence, and employability.

Throughout the enhancement theme period, universities provided reports on their progress and challenges and submitted their final reports for the final meeting of the Enhancement Theme Steering Group on 12 March 2020.

Two of the strategies set out in the enhancement theme framework are to share ideas and practices and communicate theme activities. This report contributes to those strategies by providing a summary of university final reports. It utilises the themes identified in the summary of plans to provide a structure for the report. Universities also provided reflective comments in their final reports. These reflective comments are also summarised in this report.

Enhancement theme reports

As noted, each university framed its enhancement theme plans and reports in reference to its own strategic plans and/or strategic frameworks. Some universities also referenced their Cycle 5 academic audit reports in framing their enhancement theme plans. As the enhancement theme has progressed, most universities have strengthened the connection to their strategic frameworks. Some universities have also set out connections between their enhancement theme plans and other initiatives, particularly those involving the TEC. Others have developed new strategies, plans and policies during the enhancement theme.

Although broad themes were identified in the summary of universities' plans, the specific initiatives for each university were shaped by their strategic priorities. Initiatives vary across the universities in terms of scope and scale, making any numerical summary inappropriate and synthesis difficult. The

summaries below therefore reflect the areas of coverage of the various initiatives, noting that these may differ in scope and scale between universities.

Some of the initiatives in university plans and reports are not targeted or specific to Māori students or Pasifika students. However, these initiatives address issues that impact on Māori students or Pasifika students and their inclusion is consistent with an expectation that the enhancement theme will also be relevant for other groups of students.

The broad themes identified from universities' enhancement theme plans remain evident in the final reports. Most universities reported on initiatives that spanned across access and transition, student-centric retention and university-centric retention (or organisational change).

Access and transition

Most universities included initiatives to support access and transition to university study for Māori students and for Pasifika students. The initiatives vary between universities but included:
- Review, revision and redevelopment of pathway and bridging programmes. Some of these programmes are specific to Māori students or Pasifika students and others target students from low decile schools or low SES (Socioeconomic status) backgrounds. Some of the pathway programmes focus on STEM subjects.
- Analysis, review and reconfiguration of admissions schemes and organisation, including in one case the appointment of a 'cultural navigator' in the university's contact centre.
- Review, redevelopment and investment in targeted recruitment for Māori students and for Pasifika students.
- Relationships with schools. In some cases, this includes specific programmes in schools, outreach activities and support for schools. In other cases, school initiatives are associated with building relationships with schools and sets of wider activities such as competitions and prizes.
- Increasing scholarship support for Māori students and Pasifika students.
- Developing specific advice for students through a 'digital journey' initiative.
- Focus on and development of facilities and relationships in south Auckland.

Those universities that commented on the impact or success of these initiatives mentioned:
- Increased numbers of students participating in pathway or bridging programmes.
- Increasing transition/conversion rates from foundation or preparation programmes.
- Better academic performance than for those students who had not participated in specific programmes.

It should also be noted that not all initiatives were considered to have been either successful or merited continuation and a small number of initiatives will not be continued. Some universities also commented on the significant role that the school sector plays in supporting and preparing students for university study. This is an issue that has been discussed since the beginning of the enhancement theme. Universities are continuing to contribute to discussions on how an all-of-education system approach can better enable success for Māori students and Pasifika students through Te Kāhui Amokura and Komiti Pasifika strategic engagement with education agencies and Ministers.

Retention – student oriented

All universities reported on student-focused retention initiatives. These included:

- Analysis to better understand aspects of the student experience for Māori students and for Pasifika students and specific analyses of issues such as challenges facing first year students and 'academic struggle'. Analytical approaches also included larger scale approaches that established all of university data governance and analytics approaches. For both specific and larger scale analytic approaches, university reports highlighted the use of these approaches to make evidence-informed interventions and decisions.
- Taking stock, reviewing and implementing reviews of support services for Māori students and for Pasifika students.
- Development of new (or revised) strategies and plans and monitoring frameworks.
- A range of initiatives focused on student engagement, including tuākana-teina mentoring programmes, case management and academic advisor approaches, bicultural competence and confidence, support for student organisations and student-led initiatives.
- Initiatives that celebrate success and support employment outcomes.

Initial indicators of the success of these initiatives included:

- Statistical analysis of whether specific interventions had been successful. Universities reported on interventions where it was assessed there was no impact on subsequent academic performance as well as those that did have an impact.
- Participation, retention and course and qualifications completions data.
- Process changes.
- Project and plan completion and reporting milestones.

Analytical approaches are a major characteristic of student-oriented retention approaches. Universities are using a range of data sources and analyses to understand the university experience and success for Māori students and for Pasifika students. These approaches should be augmented by information from enhancement theme symposia where Māori students and Pasifika students describe success from their perspectives.

Retention – university centric (organisational change)

Most universities also reported on more university-centric retention initiatives that involved some form of organisational change in the university. These initiatives included:

- Development of university statutes and strategies focussed on or making explicit reference to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, whanonga pono and Māori and Pasifika plans.
- Revising and reshaping teaching and learning to reflect inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogies and culturally sustaining teaching.
- Changes to other teaching and learning policies including assessment and lecture capture.
- Frameworks and policies for use of te reo Māori, including policies that commit to specific Māori dialects.
- Curriculum revision and development and changes to academic approval to include Mātauranga Māori and Pasifika perspectives.
- Development of cultural narratives and Kaupapa Māori spaces in accommodation, as well as major Pā and Fale developments.

- Engaging staff in cultural journeys and programmes for strengthening staff cultural competence, as well as developing staff networks.
- Organisational change and appointment of Māori roles and Pasifika roles.
- Increasing support for postgraduate students and research initiatives.

Less evidence of the impact or success of these initiatives, other than achieving project or plan milestones, was reported by universities. In contrast to student-focussed initiatives, discussed in the previous section, where increasingly rich data is being developed and managed through sophisticated approaches, fewer indicators of organisational or cultural change in universities are available. A further issue may be that the success of these sorts of initiatives may not be seen for a longer period. Universities will however report on progress in addressing their enhancement theme plans in their self-review reports for the audit phase of Cycle 6 and will need to present evidence for those reports.

Enhancement theme reflections

Universities provided reflections on the enhancement theme in their final reports and this section also draws on reflective comments made at the final Enhancement Theme Steering Group meeting.

As part of their reflections, universities commented on how they had organised enhancement theme activities within their universities. Most universities reported the establishment of an internal steering group and the inclusion of Māori students and Pasifika students on university steering groups. Universities also commented on how enhancement theme activities had been launched and reported on. Again, this varies between universities but in some cases included formal launches, updates to all staff and reporting to senior management.

Universities again reiterated that the enhancement theme itself had not generated new initiatives as it built on existing work. For a number of universities however, the enhancement theme assisted in their focussing on or prioritisation of access, outcomes and opportunities for Māori students and for Pasifika students, allowed consolidation of other work, and raised the profile of work in this area. Some universities commented that it improved their understanding of the issues underlying the theme topic and enabled faster progress than might have been the case without the theme.

Recognition of the importance of evidence for both the enhancement theme itself and for demonstrating progress in the audit phase of Cycle 6 was another positive reflection. The sharing of initiatives and approaches both internally and between universities was also seen as positive. However, the ability to adopt good practice from other universities was limited by differing contexts.

Other challenges identified in university reflective comments were:
- Gaining engagement beyond those immediately involved in the enhancement theme. It was recognised that this was not an issue specific to the enhancement theme, but the theme did not offer a new way of addressing this issue.
- Relatively short timeframes for both the enhancement theme phase of Cycle 6 itself and between the enhancement and audit phases of Cycle 6. When coupled with the timelags in availability of some data, some universities are concerned that it may be difficult to demonstrate progress on their enhancement theme plans at the time of the audit for the university. This is a point that needs to be conveyed to audit panels.
- That opportunities to involve more subject experts, increase access to cultural leadership and make connections to other major workstreams (specifically the TEC's Ōritetanga programme) could have strengthened the enhancement theme. Some universities did

specifically reference their engagement with Ōritetanga but the enhancement theme did not engage with this programme. However, the enhancement theme is not the only, nor even the likely main point of connection between universities and Ōritetanga.

- Acknowledgement that initiatives within universities are limited by underlying, complex and entrenched, social issues of disadvantage. These are unlikely to be addressed by single approaches and single organisations. However, universities have a contribution to make.
- A further broader issue raised by the Enhancement Theme Steering Group is that in acknowledging both the wider issues of disadvantage and recognising that findings from the enhancement theme will have benefit for other groups of underserved students, there may be a need to draw distinctions between these issues and Te Tiriti o Waitangi rights of partnership, protection and participation, recognitions of Aotearoa's place in the Pacific and as a Pacific nation, and equity. Patterns of practice could be seen from other contexts, for example, health, where, as the focus shifted from Māori and Pacific to equity, it could 'overwhelm' Māori and Pacific specific approaches based on rights and place and perpetuate the status quo. 'Getting it right' for Māori students and Pasifika students will have benefits for all students, without changing the approach into an equity-based one.
- The Enhancement Theme Steering Group also recognised a tension between recognising progress and gains made while acknowledging that gaps in access and achievement persist and that significant challenges still exist and need to be addressed. Is progress sufficient and fast enough? Different narratives and perspectives exist and these conversations need to be ongoing. Some universities commented that their enhancement theme approach would continue after the end of the enhancement phase in Cycle 6.

In addition to the reflections provided by universities in their reports and those made by the Enhancement Theme Steering group at their final meeting, Te Kāhui Amokura, Te Mana Ākonga, Komiti Pasifika and Tauira Pasifika were invited to review the draft report and add further comment.

Tauira Pasifika considered that the Enhancement Theme had ensured student voice was a valued part of the decision-making process. They recognise a challenge that exists for student contributions is the high turnover of student representatives each year which heavily impact student effectiveness, knowledge and participation. Despite this, the Enhancement Theme has provided a good model of partnership, particularly for underrepresented groups, with senior leadership members of universities to further improve student voice in quality enhancement process.

This view was also expressed by Te Mana Ākonga who felt that the inclusion of student voice brought a perspective that too often is excluded from the dialogue. "It is imperative that students are included in these discussions, we bring kōrero on behalf of our Tauira who we know and represent best. Our Tauira are more than statistics, we are people with whānau, hapu and iwi walking alongside us and our journey through University".

Conclusions and next steps

The enhancement theme initiatives undertaken by universities have occurred in a context and do not constitute the entirety of university initiatives and programmes that support success for Māori students and for Pasifika students. University enhancement theme initiatives have been primarily driven by strategic plans and priorities and this was expected and appropriate.

While the enhancement theme may not have generated new initiatives, it has provided a mechanism for focus and sharing of priorities, initiatives and progress both within and between universities. For some universities, the enhancement theme has contributed to a raising of

awareness and provided leverage for progress on initiatives. The Enhancement Theme Steering Group commented at their final meeting that it was not surprising that the enhancement theme had not generated 'new' initiatives for many universities and that this should not be a disadvantage to the enhancement theme as by definition, practice needs to exist before it can be enhanced. An enhancement theme should be a mechanism for focussing and sharing practice and it is to be expected that it will build on rather than start practice.

This report has summarised the coverage of plans and initiatives reported by universities in their enhancement theme final reports. The final enhancement theme reports provide a great deal of valuable information from individual universities. This summary report provides a guide to what sorts of initiatives have been pursued by universities during the enhancement phase of Cycle 6 Academic Audit and an initial point of reference for universities that might be considering further initiatives.

These initiatives that universities have reported with respect to their enhancement theme plans are broadly grouped into those addressing access and transition and those addressing retention. Student-centric retention initiatives are distinguished from retention initiatives which are more university-centric or involve organisational change. Thematic topics covered within each of three broad categories have been identified.

Universities provided initial indications of the impact of initiatives. Overall, the Steering Group is of the view that the impact of enhancement theme initiatives will be seen in the Cycle 6 academic reports for universities. Two guideline statements in the audit framework specifically address a university's progress on its enhancement theme plan. All of education system discussions will continue through Te Kāhui Amokura and Komiti Pasifika strategic engagement with education agencies and Ministers.

University and student reflections on the enhancement theme are also summarised in this report. These reflections will be considered further in an interim review of Cycle 6 audits (scheduled for after the second audit in the cycle) and a wider review at the conclusion of Cycle 6. The interim review will examine whether the audit framework and processes are eliciting the sorts of information expected. The full review will occur in the final year of Cycle 6 (originally 2024). Decisions on whether to continue with the composite audit cycle (enhancement phase followed by audit phase) can be made then. The specific issue regarding timeframes and timelags, will be communicated to audit panels.

Enhancement Theme Steering Group, August 2020

References

ETSG. (2017). *Terms of Reference*. Retrieved from New Zealand Universities' Ehancement Theme: https://bcb9cf7d-96f9-487e-9c2d-06fcb70a8ce0.filesusr.com/ugd/af35cb_158551a5ab134668b0ac980b22d0934d.pdf