NGĀ KĪWAI O TE KETE

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Ko koe ki tēnā, ko ahau ki tēnei kīwai o te kete.
You take that handle and I'll take this handle of the basket.

This whakataukī (proverb or saying) reflects the idea of students and staff working together to achieve common goals.

KUPU WHAKATAKI
INTRODUCTION

Education providers increasingly recognise the importance of working collaboratively with their student communities and ensuring student representation in decision-making.

Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington is committed to working with students as partners. This Student Engagement Framework has been developed to support this work. It builds on the University's Strategic Plan, and reflects our Te Tiriti Statute, and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Framework.

Development of this document has been a collaborative effort by students and staff. It is intended to encompass the University's different student communities—domestic and international, at undergraduate and postgraduate level—as well as incorporate the needs of students who identify with multiple communities.

The University recognises inclusion of our diverse communities is critical to the framework's success.

ARONGA
PURPOSE

This framework establishes the vision, values, and objectives of student engagement within Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington. It covers all institutional activities from learning and teaching to research, provision of support services, and strategic and operational governance.

WAWATA MĀTĀMUA
VISION

To inspire future generations to step up to governance roles, we need to create a shared understanding of what good governance can achieve.

The vision of this framework is to create a culture of collaboration—based on genuine respect, transparency, and inclusion—to achieve our strategic direction.

At the core is a collaborative community working together: **Te Herenga Waka i e! Our students, our staff, our community, our place.**

NGĀ UARA
VALUES

The framework is based upon the strategic values of Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington. Our core ethical values are respect, responsibility, fairness, integrity, and empathy.

With, and as, tangata whenua, we value Te Tiriti o Waitangi, rangatiratanga, manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, whai mātauranga, whanaungatanga, and akoranga.

NGĀ WHĀINGA
OBJECTIVES

The framework has six objectives.

1. Support our strategic vision and honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Our community needs to be committed to an environment where staff and students work together as valued partners and where honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi is central to our aspirations.

As a world-leading capital-city university, we play a prominent role in the life of Wellington and beyond. We are aware of the special and close connections and relationship that exist between the University and the city of Wellington, helping to shape the future of our city. There is a special bond between the University and the city that provides a rich and diverse set of opportunities, and experiences full of vibrancy and energy.

Our students and staff have strong links with business, government, iwi, and other agencies, and we play a pivotal role in leading the thinking on major issues that affect the environmental, societal, cultural, and economic wellbeing of Aotearoa New Zealand, the Asia–Pacific region, and the wider world.

We are a leading capital-city and global university with our marae at our heart.

- Our staff and students lead thinking and research that contribute to the future.

- We provide opportunities for learning and development through deep connections with our city, iwi, and business.

- We are part of a vibrant, diverse, and exciting city environment.

- Te reo, tikanga, and mātauranga Māori underpin all our activities and the responsibility to honour this commitment is held by all.

2. Develop a culture of respectful and valued engagement

Engaging and valuing the expertise of our students in governance, academic quality, research excellence, and service quality will enable our community to achieve its goals.

Our culture needs to be consistent with the University's values and be built upon honesty, trust, and transparency. Senior leaders of staff and students have a responsibility to help shape our organisational culture, and nurture respectful behaviour in our community.

As with any large organisation, acknowledging and manging power imbalances is also important.

Our university is committed to decision-making processes that:

- are based on core ethical values and a recognised code of behaviour

- recognise collective accountability and responsibility for positive change

- provide a safe and trusted environment where the student voice is heard, understood, and valued

- ensure decisions are informed, and acknowledge and manage power differences

- foster a consistent approach across all forums.

3. Foster equitable, diverse, and inclusive practice

We all share a responsibility to respect the rights, differences, and dignity of others, and to sustain a culture that fosters the acquisition of knowledge and wellbeing.

This framework acknowledges and celebrates the richness of cultures, experiences, and identities that exist within the university community. We want all students to be able to learn in an environment that is safe, that values wellbeing, and that understands and enables them to connect and belong.

This requires us to examine our own practices and strive to create an inclusive environment.

To promote a culture of working together, the University is committed to developing processes that:

- include diverse voices

- recognise the diverse life experiences of students and staff

- enable our student communities to thrive and feel they belong

- celebrate and respect our differences as we work on shared priorities

- support inclusion and equity so all voices are valued and heard.

4. Develop student capability for leadership

Students must be supported and resourced so they can undertake representative work in a meaningful and knowledgeable way.

Students have different pathways to representative positions and may come to them with no previous experience in a leadership role. Students moving into these positions need to be supported by their student body. Staff also have a responsibility to ensure student representatives have the tools they need to be effective in the role.

Ways to recognise and reward student contributions, and manage student workload, also need to be considered and collaboratively agreed.

To develop student capability, the University is committed to ensuring:

- governance and representation roles are clear and understood

- operating rules and procedures are clear and known to all parties

- pathways for student leadership are supported to enable development into roles

- training and induction programmes are held for student leaders and staff who chair boards and committees

- a range of recognition and reward options are created

- mentoring and coaching programmes, either internal or external, are available.

5. Keep students connected and informed

Strong communication is key to being part of a connected and informed community, and creating a sense of belonging.

Effective collaboration cannot take place without good communication. For a partnership to succeed, clear communication and a willingness to share information are essential.

Successful engagement goes beyond consultation. Real collaboration involves creating an environment of openness with mutual respect and trust. It fosters a genuine determination to reach a common objective by sharing knowledge and insights.

The University recognises working collaboratively in this way fosters better decision-making. We are committed to ensuring:

- students and staff have access to timely, relevant information

- information provided is easily accessible and understood

- staff and students have formal and informal opportunities for dialogue and debate

- students are engaged in decision-making across all activities

- engagement will be at the beginning and throughout the process

- communication channels are clear and well understood.

6. Monitor and review partnership progress

Monitoring and reviewing progress will prepare and position us for the future.

Evaluation of our progress is essential to identify what is working successfully and areas where improvements are needed. It also allows areas of strategic and operational change to be identified, prioritised, and resourced.

Agreement is required on evaluation approaches that will work best for our community. There is a considerable repository of student survey information that has been amassed over many years. However, it needs to be utilised more effectively to help guide decision-making. There are also rich sources of information in course feedback forms, programme and service reviews, graduating year reviews, and internal and external audits.

To ensure progress is tracked, the University undertakes to:

- review all engagement initiatives and evaluate impacts

- provide feedback findings to students and staff

- utilise student surveys and feedback to inform agreed improvements

- determine accountability and responsibility for change initiatives

- identify and prioritise changes required

- utilise course and programme information to enhance quality

- use audit reports to help direct improvements

- conduct service reviews.

BENEFITS OF COLLABORATIVE WORKING

Collaborative working:

- improves the effectiveness of the organisation

- increases the transparency of information between partners

- creates space for student voices to be genuinely heard and engaged in their own learning

- enables informed decision-making

- provides the opportunity for students to participate democratically in institutional life, which sets them up for active involvement as citizens in a democratic state

- contributes to, and improves, the quality of learning, research, governance, and services

- creates connectedness and improves community wellbeing

- builds a shared vision and strategic direction that all can support and own

- supports inclusiveness and demonstrates that we live our values

- contributes to the development of our graduate attributes:
  - to have a specialised understanding of their chosen field(s) of study
  - to exhibit well-developed skills in critical and creative thinking
  - to communicate complex ideas effectively and accurately in a range of contexts
  - to demonstrate intellectual autonomy through independence of thought, openness to ideas and information, and a capacity to manage their own learning
  - to demonstrate intellectual integrity and understand the ethics of scholarship

- enables students to be better prepared to contribute to society and develop the skills and attributes to be tomorrow's leaders.

COMMITTEES AND FORUMS

Below are various forms and forums with which students and their associations are formally engaged at the University. In addition, many students engage informally with academic and professional staff, both in person and through a range of communication channels, with examples identified below.

University formal boards and committees

There is formal student academic representation on many boards and committees (for further information, see www.wgtn.ac.nz/students/get-involved/representation and www.vuwpgsa.ac.nz/representation). These include:

- Council and Council subcommittees
- Academic Board
- Academic Committee
- Learning and Teaching Committee
- Faculty boards
- Faculty learning and teaching committees
- class representatives.

Wider university engagement

Student representatives are included in a range of dedicated university committees, including the:

- Advisory Committee on the Student Services Levy
- Animal Ethics Committee
- Honours Committee
- Human Ethics Committee
- Joint Student Union Board
- Library Information and Services Committee
- Mauri Ora Student Advisory Committee
- Research and Sustainability Steering Group.

The principles set out in the Student Engagement Framework will apply to multiple issues with varying complexity. Working together will involve a range of approaches to partnership, depending on the context. Relevant and appropriate approaches will include advisory roles, advocacy, co-design, consultation, decision-making, and feedback.

- Advisory roles: These have the power to make recommendations but not to approve or implement them; for example, the Mauri Ora Student Advisory Committee and the Advisory Committee on the Student Services Levy.

- Advocacy: Public support for an idea, plan, or way of doing something.

- Co-design: Staff and students work together to actively create an agreed outcome.

- Consultation: The action or process of formally consulting or discussing a critical issue. This is usually used to gather views from a wider group that may have different opinions and perceptions.

- Decision-making: The act or process of deciding something, especially with a group of people; for example, Council members.

- Feedback: Information about reactions to a service, product, a person's performance of a task, or similar, which is used as a basis for improvement.