



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF
WELLINGTON
TE HERENGA WAKA



Pastoral Care Code

SELF-ATTESTATION REPORT 2025

JULY 2026

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Disclosure of generative AI use

This report was prepared with editorial assistance from Microsoft Copilot. All content has been reviewed for accuracy before publication.

Executive Summary

This self-attestation report outlines Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington’s continued progress in meeting the requirements of the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice (the Code) in 2025. It demonstrates a mature, embedded approach to pastoral care, characterised by strategic alignment, evidence-informed decision-making, and a sustained commitment to continuous improvement. The content of this report was gathered from staff and teams across the University and existing 2025 reports. Progress on actions identified in the 2024 organisation-wide system self-review of the Code is included. Key content is outlined below.

Overall assurance of compliance and continuous improvement

- The University maintains a high level of compliance with the Code.
- Systems are supported by structured review, governance oversight, and annual reporting.
- Activity reflects both consolidation of existing systems and targeted improvements.

A diverse and growing student community

- Total student population of 21,435 in 2025.
- Growth across Māori, Pasifika, international, disabled, rainbow, and refugee-background cohorts.
- Improved participation, retention, and access to support services.

Strengthened wellbeing and safety systems (Outcome 1)

- Implementation of the Iho framework.
- Progression of Ki te rā—Student Wellbeing Outcomes Framework.
- Expansion of staff training in wellbeing, cultural capability, and inclusion.

Enhanced student voice and engagement (Outcome 2)

- VUWSA President feedback affirming the value of the Student Assembly.
- Strong engagement through the *Have Your Say* survey and representative structures.
- Positive trends in students feeling valued and heard.
- Improved accessibility and consistency of complaints processes.

Inclusive learning environments and student experience (Outcome 3)

- Positive student feedback on safety, respect, and services.
- Progress toward integrated student services and Info Hub model.
- Strengthened transition and retention initiatives, including Tau Mai Week and He Kokonga Whare e Kitea.

Targeted support for health, wellbeing, and safety (Outcome 4)

- Earlier engagement and improved triage in health and counselling services.
- Targeted support pathways, including for neurodiverse students.
- Enhancements to accommodation pastoral care and engagement models.

We acknowledge contributions to this report from a wide range of student services teams, Office of the DVC Māori and Kaitiakitanga, Office of Vaka Tangata Moana, Campus Operations, Digital Solutions, Faculty of Graduate Research, HR Organisational Development, Library, Planning and Management Information, and the VUWSA President.

Background

The *Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice* (the Code), which was introduced in 2021, sets out the outcomes and processes that tertiary education providers must meet to ensure the wellbeing, safety, and positive learning experiences of domestic and international students. Providers are required to demonstrate compliance with the Code through regular self-review, monitoring, and reporting, including annual self-attestation and, where applicable, system self-reviews.

Since the introduction of the Code in 2021, Te Herenga Waka–Victoria University of Wellington has undertaken a structured and iterative programme of work to embed the Code’s requirements into University systems and practices. Across the period 2021–2024, this work has included:

- Establishing a clear baseline of compliance through a comprehensive University-wide Code Gap Analysis (2021), identifying areas of strength as well as gaps and opportunities for improvement.
- Developing and implementing targeted action plans to address identified gaps (from 2022), alongside broader enhancements to existing pastoral care, wellbeing, and safety systems.
- Maintaining regular oversight and accountability through internal governance and reporting mechanisms, including quarterly reporting to the Committee on University Student Pastoral Care (CUSPaC) (2022) and ongoing engagement with committees and external sector bodies (2021–2024).
- Submitting annual self-attestation reports that document progress and provide assurance of compliance (2022 and 2023 submissions).
- Successfully completing verification processes focused on Outcomes 5 to 7 of the Code - the University’s accommodation pastoral care system (2023), and the international-specific Code Outcomes 8 to 12 (2024).
- Undertaking an organisation-wide system self-review to evaluate how pastoral care systems give effect to the Code’s outcomes (2024), supported by qualitative and quantitative evidence.

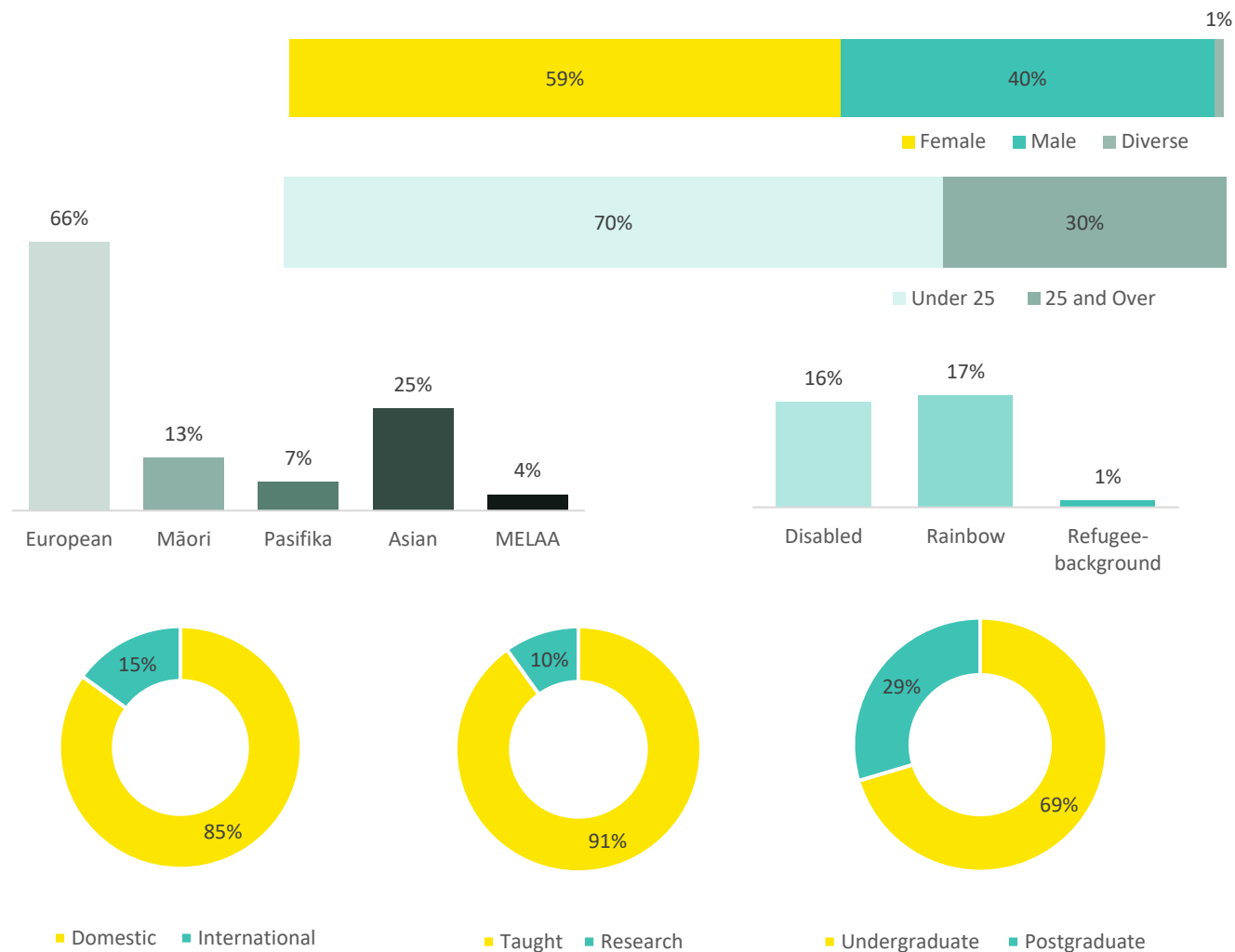
Collectively, this programme of work demonstrates Te Herenga Waka’s sustained commitment to meeting the requirements of the Code. Through regular self-review, transparent reporting, and continuous improvement, the University continues to strengthen its systems to support the wellbeing, safety, and educational success of its diverse taura communities.

In 2025, the wellbeing and safety of taura at Te Herenga Waka continued to be shaped by a complex and evolving external environment, both nationally and globally. Persistent cost of living pressures in Aotearoa contributed to financial stress for many students, while increasing demand on health and mental health services reflected broader system constraints. Globally, geopolitical instability, ongoing impacts of climate change, and heightened exposure to international events through digital media contributed to uncertainty and anxiety among taura. These factors, in addition to several local weather events, influenced their sense of wellbeing, safety, and belonging, reinforcing the importance of a responsive, whole-of-provider approach to pastoral care.

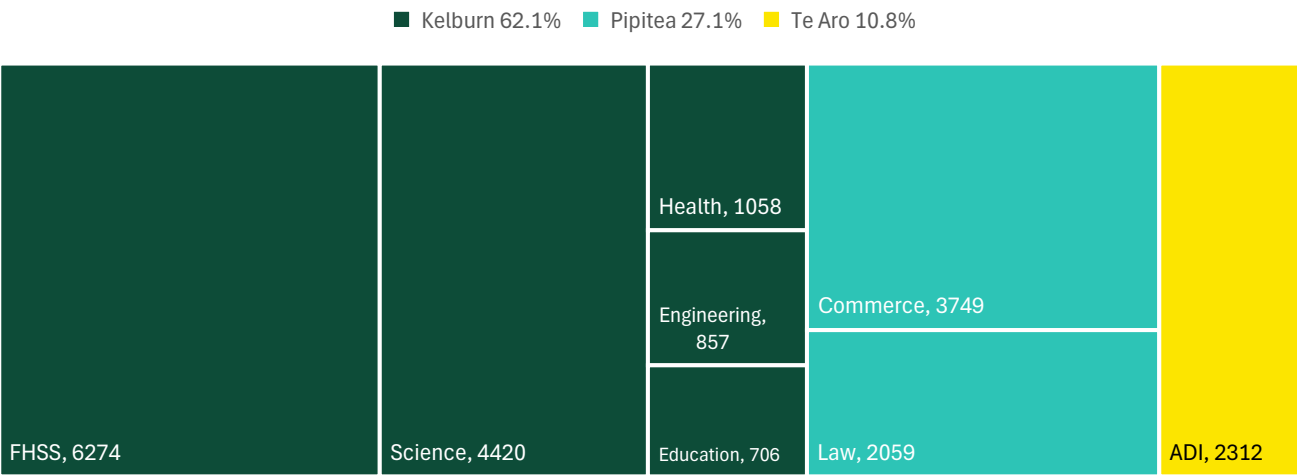
Student community at Te Herenga Waka

Below is a snapshot of the enrolled student population in 2025:

Total enrolled students (headcount) was 21,435



Campus and Faculty



STUDENT COHORTS AT A GLANCE¹

TAUIRA MĀORI²

2025 13.4%
2024 12.8%



Proportion of
student body

2025 77.5%
2024 73.2%



Retention of
1st year undergraduates

2025 82%
2024 78%

Satisfaction with
academic experience

PASIFIKA STUDENTS²

2025 7.3%
2024 7.1%



Proportion of
student body

2025 77.1%
2024 75%



Retention of
1st year undergraduates

80%

Proud to be a student
at this University
(all students 75%)

DISABLED STUDENTS

2025 3,283
2024 2,804



Registered and
receiving support

2025 87.1%
2022 81.3%



Successful course
completion

Te Ara
Taupuhipuhi—
Disability Inclusion
Action Plan
2023-2025

¹ This data is a representation of the student profile enrolled in 2025. It is not designed as a comparison of the same data across the student cohorts

² Data from Learner Success Plan Quarter 4 report 2025

RAINBOW OR TAKATĀPUI STUDENTS

3,323

Self-identified at enrolment (headcount)



2025 16.5%

2024 13%

Proportion of
student body

REFUGEE BACKGROUND STUDENTS

1.1%

Self-identified at enrolment (headcount)



2025 226

2024 132

Number of students
(headcount)

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

3,191

Number enrolled in 2025 (headcount)

- Highest number since 2019
- Over half were postgraduates

STUDENTS LIVING IN UNIVERSITY ACCOMMODATION

2,059

First year catered halls

835

Independent living halls

Progress against actions from 2024 Code self-review

Te Herenga Waka's [2024 organisation-wide self-review of the Code](#) provided a rich picture of systems that support taura wellbeing, safety, and educational success. The report identified the ongoing actions described in the table below which are all progressing well as part of a cycle of continuous improvement. In the following sections, detail will be provided about work completed in 2025 for each action (see page numbers), along with other relevant activity and changes.

Area of focus	Action	Page no.
Outcome 1: A learner wellbeing and safety system		
Ki te rā—Student Wellbeing Outcomes Framework	Progress the implementation plan, supporting teams responsible for actions and fostering a collaborative approach. Establish the Ki te rā—Student Wellbeing Outcomes Framework Working Group. Develop a reporting approach for 2025.	10
Staff training	Implement a process to monitor staff engagement with Code training courses and maintain a record of learning. Continue to expand the delivery of in-person Recognise, Respond, Refer training that complements the Code online courses. Partner with VUWSA to strengthen the existing student representatives training and improve access to University documentation and resources.	13
Outcome 2: Learner voice		
Ngā Kīwai o te Kete—Student Engagement Framework refresh	Review the framework to ensure student voice and partnership, participation and collaboration in decision-making, and initiatives to support the student experience are optimised.	14
Complaints process	Review and enhance the student complaints process to enable a more consistent approach for managing complaints across the University.	16
Outcome 3: Safe, inclusive, support and accessible physical and digital learning environments		
Integrated student services	Make ongoing and iterative enhancements to ensure a pan-University integrated, coordinated and student centric approach is consistently used.	19
First year retention plan	Take a pan-university approach to progress first year retention initiatives.	20
User experience of student systems e.g. Kurawai, Pūaha, Nuku and Banner.	Improve workflows, referral systems and reporting to enable staff to work efficiently to identify and meet Taura needs.	22
Outcome 4: Learners are safe and well		
See ongoing, embedded actions and continuous, responsive improvements.		

Outcome 1: Learner wellbeing and safety system

Providers must take a whole-of-provider approach to maintain a strategic and transparent learner wellbeing and safety system that responds to the diverse needs of their learners

This section describes two strategic changes in 2025 – the implementation of the Iho and changes to the Office of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor Pasifika. It also provides an overview of the implementation of Ki te rā—Student Wellbeing Outcomes Framework and delivery of staff training.

Iho framework

In 2025 the Iho, a structure grounded in Mai i te Iho ki te Pae—Māori Strategic Outcomes Framework, was implemented, defining the core of Māori identity within the University.

- Te Kawa a Māui—The School of Māori Studies moved from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences to the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Māori and Kaitiakitanga. Aimed at consolidating the Māori core at Te Herenga Waka, the Iho framework aligns the marae, Āwhina—Māori Student Support, and the academic core of mātauranga Māori and te reo Māori to give effect to the rangatiratanga principle in Te Tiriti o Waitangi Statute.
- This integration created a culturally grounded environment that actively embeds Māori values across campus, normalising the use of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori, and enhancing cultural safety where tauira Māori and staff see their identities reflected and respected across Te Herenga Waka.
- With a centrally led approach, faculty teaching staff have stronger support with the application of Māori-related pedagogies and embedding mātauranga Māori to benefit tauira Māori.
- Ngā Mokopuna, opened in December 2024, is a sustainable building on the Kelburn campus and a transformative place to explore relationships with the environment, deepening understanding of service to it rather than the reverse. A living lab for the University, which complements our whareniui, Te Tumu Herenga Waka, it is a place where staff and students can feel connected to Wellington and Aotearoa. In this space where people gather and find figurative shelter, tikanga Māori prevails. With Iho teams based at Ngā Mokopuna, it is an active and welcoming space for all tauira, staff, and community, enriching their sense of belonging to the Te Herenga Waka whānau.

The Office of the Assistant Vice Chancellor Pasifika (OAVCP)

The year of 2025 also brought a refreshed approach to delivering Te Herenga Waka’s ambition for Pasifika. Dame Luamanuvao Winnie Laban concluded 14 years of distinguished service as Associate Vice-Chancellor Pasifika (AVCP), with Dr Emma Dunlop-Bennett appointed to the role in September.

- The OAVCP’s work is guided by the strategic pillars as set out in the *Pasifika Strategy and Operational Plan* which includes: 1) **Pasifika Identity**: Growing the Pasifika identity of Te Herenga Waka; **Pasifika Student Success**: Improving Pasifika student enrolment, retention, and completion; and **Pasifika Staff Success**: Enhancing outcomes for Pasifika staff across all aspects of employment, alongside increasing the Pasifika cultural intelligence of all staff at Te Herenga Waka.
- Working within the footprint of 11 full-time equivalent staff members, a change process took place in late September 2025 to align resource with the three strategic priorities.

- The new structure, effective 20 January 2026, has achieved this alignment as well as prioritised direction of effort towards Pasifika student academic success.
- The refreshed approach has continued in 2026, with the OAVCP proactively working to strengthen its pastoral and academic support by deepening partnerships with faculties and embedding Pasifika-centred initiatives that enhance student belonging, connection, and wellbeing. To guide this work, the AVCP will undertake a strategic assessment of the operating environment for the period through to 2035, focusing on the key challenges and opportunities facing the tertiary education sector – particularly those impacting peoples of and from the Pacific.

Ki te rā–Student Wellbeing Outcomes Framework

Ki te rā–Student Wellbeing Outcomes Framework 2024-2030 (Ki te rā) was approved by University Council mid-2024. In 2025, implementation was progressed with collaborative contributions from Te Herenga Waka’s staff and taura, along with enhanced data monitoring and implementation of actions. A copy of Ki te rā can be accessed on this [webpage](#).

Below is a summary of key progress.

- To support teams responsible for Ki te rā actions and to create wider awareness, Ki te rā was well socialised across the University community with over 30 team presentations to staff and student leaders to support the implementation, along with supporting web content.
- When establishing Ki te rā, a formal working group to support implementation was proposed. That has not been required yet as the Associate Director-Student Equity and Wellbeing, who leads Ki te rā implementation, receives significant input from a range of academic and professional staff wellbeing experts on wellbeing initiatives.
- Responsibility holders have reported progress on deliverables through to Manawa Ora–Student Wellbeing. Tracking and reporting processes will continue to evolve.
- To reflect the literature that acknowledges wellbeing and illbeing co-exist and are not simply opposites of each other, in 2024, illbeing was measured alongside wellbeing in the annual student Have Your Say survey. The survey uses the WHO-5 Wellbeing Index, which is a simple, evidence-based and well utilised tool for self-reporting current states of wellbeing. The total raw score ranges from 0 to 25, with a score between 7-12 indicating low wellbeing and a score of 13-25 indicating moderate to excellent wellbeing. The large WHO-5 studies put average scores of tertiary students between 10.5-11.25, lower than general population norms (15-17.5). In 2025, Te Herenga Waka taura had an average WHO-5 Wellbeing Index score of 12.3 which is a small increase on the average score 12.1 in 2024.
- In 2025, variations in wellbeing and illbeing data across the student cohorts, and faculties was explored to inform targeting initiatives. For example:
 - The Faculty of Law (11.5) and the Faculty of Architecture and Design (11.8), have noticeably lower wellbeing rates than the Faculty of Education, Health and Psychology (12.2), Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (12.2), Faculty of Science and Engineering (12.4), and the Faculty of Business and Government (12.9).
 - Undergraduate students have lower wellbeing rates (11.9) than postgraduate students (13.4).

- Wellbeing experts advise that it will take some time before substantive change in wellbeing and illbeing results can be expected, and it is important to focus on what the University can control, and influence. Wellbeing results are also impacted by a higher percentage of school leavers experiencing mental distress, and the wider societal pressures taurira are experiencing such as climate change, cost of living and geopolitical events.

Progress against actions in Ki te rā

Progress made in 2025 against actions in Te Mahere Whakahaere–Action Plan 2024-2026 is detailed below:

- **Action 1.2 a)** – Responding to Suicidal Behaviour Policy has been removed as it was outdated and not aligned with best practices. Additional content has been placed on the staff intranet site about coordination points in response to a student death and support for the impacted community. Strengthened escalation points for [Te Kopanga–University Accommodation](#), [Mauri Ora–Student Health and Counselling](#), and [Taurira–Student Interest](#) are in place.
- **Action 1.3 a)** – A wellbeing and equity course toolkit for academic staff has been established with initial resources on rainbow inclusive course design and teaching and disability inclusion strategies and confidence for staff.
- **Action 1.3 b)** – Threshold standards were developed by the Centre for Academic Development and [Te Amaru-Disability Services](#) contributed to ensure accessibility best practice. In 2025 these standards were widely promoted to academic staff and 1000 individual page views were recorded, with 300 people enrolled in the course so far. These standards will be continually reviewed.
- **Action 2.1 a)** – Staff professional development (PD) was developed and implemented to increase understanding of discriminatory behaviour and support the full inclusion of equity students and our diverse student body. These included PD on anti-racism (Nuku course on Cultural Safety, workshops on Unconscious Bias), LGBTQIA+ inclusion (Creating Rainbow Inclusive Learning Environments).
- **Action 2.1 b)** – A host of community building events celebrating our culturally diverse communities and students from equity groups were held including: cohort specific orientation events, Pasifika Night Market, Rā Māketē, World Refugee Day, Eid Celebration, Pride Festival, NZ Sign Language Week, Pasifika language revitalisation activities during awareness weeks, and cohort specific study sessions.
- **Action 2.2 a)** – Information on how to [study remotely while sick](#) is available on the University’s website, alongside [recommendations on devices and connectivity](#) for online learning. Additionally, [Te Taiako—Student Learning](#) has an online resource on [skills for online learning](#). Future students can access a list of [courses that are taught and entirely online](#) in advance of enrolment.
- **Action 2.3.a)** – Tauria—Student Interest provided bystander intervention training for residential assistants in halls of residence and other tools students can use to reduce harm in the halls communities.
- **Action 2.3.c)** – The Poneke Promise (a community-driven partnership, initiated in 2021, which worked to make central Wellington safe, vibrant, and welcoming) is now more focused on homelessness/anti-social behaviour, rather than its past focus on reducing sexual harm.

- **Action 2.5 a)** – Strategies for students to cope with climate change grief and concern have been promoted through [Manawa Ora—Student Wellbeing](#) and students have responded well to these.
- **Actions 3.1 a) and 3.2 b)** – A preventative Nuku based [Wellbeing Kete](#) was established and introduced to all students, providing evidence-based information and skills to whakamana their wellbeing. Two modules have been developed thus far, *Developing strong, supportive friendships*, and *Reflecting on your wellbeing*, with two more under development covering *Challenging conversations* and *Sexuality and gender identity*. These modules are evidence-based and utilise the expertise of staff and the lived experience of tauira.
- **Action 3.3 b)** – Availability of wellbeing support at Te Aro campus has been increased with a trial pop-up *Bubble*, a wellbeing space where tauira can access peer-support, free fruit and hot drinks, and paw therapy (therapy dogs). In Trimester 2 2025, tauira engaged with this 267 times.
- **Action 4.1.a)** – Tauria—Student Interest, in collaboration with Mauri Ora, deliver Recognise and Respond training to staff across the university. In 2025, there was a new initiative to offer this through the LibCal booking system to reach a wider audience of staff. These sessions have been well attended (see table on P14).
- **Action 4.2.a)** – Staff working in specialist services have received professional development on risk management approaches for behavioural challenges arising in tauira with complex needs, including neurodiverse students, to ensure our risk management approaches are mana enhancing.
- **Action 4.3.a)** – The [complaints process](#) for tauira has been made more accessible (see P16).
- **Action 4.5.a)** – A positive relationship with Aoake Te Rā, who provide nationwide support and advice following suspected suicide deaths, has been established and has further strengthened the University's response.
- A University-wide approach was taken to Te Wiki o te Hauora Hinengaro—Mental Health Awareness Week supported by senior leadership, with over 30 events hosted for tauira and staff across Kelburn, Te Aro, and Pipitea. The events were well engaged with and positive feedback was received.

2026 planned implementation of Ki te rā includes:

- Expand the presence of Manawa Ora—Student Wellbeing to Pipitea Campus, to contribute to increasing the wellbeing of Pipitea based tauira and the awareness preventative wellbeing support.
- Develop additional Wellbeing Kete modules to increase wellbeing literacy, utilising wellbeing expertise, and tauira, and ensuring the modules are evidence based.
- To support the implementation of the embed and prepare outcome in Ki te rā, commence a programme of wellbeing presentations in key courses across all faculties to increase tauira engagement with preventative wellbeing support and enhance community and connection within courses. Collaborate with Associate Deans to prioritise courses, along with considering the wellbeing, achievement, and retention data to target delivery of this initiative.
- Manawa Ora—Student Wellbeing to collaborate with teams who have a role in implementing Ki te rā by conducting rolling meetings with them to ensure tauira wellbeing stays on the agenda, initiatives are well socialised and deliverables met.

Staff training

In 2025, the University's approach to staff training included the following key elements:

- A tiered and complementary training framework, combining mandatory online learning with targeted in-person and facilitated workshops delivered by specialist teams.
- Expanded delivery of Recognise, Respond and Refer (RRR) training across the organisation, delivered collaboratively by Tauria–Student Interest and Mauri Ora, and supported by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team.
- Increased access to RRR training through centrally scheduled sessions via LibCal, enabling staff from across faculties and professional service units to participate.
- Targeted training for staff working in high-contact and higher-risk environments, including accommodation staff, residential assistants, night managers, and tutors.
- Induction training for all new research supervisors, and delivery of new seminars for experienced research supervisors, to allow sharing of good practice and to enhance their skillset.
- Professional development that strengthens cultural safety, inclusion, and equity capability, including training related to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, intercultural competence, Pasifika engagement, rainbow inclusion, disability inclusion, and unconscious bias.
- A marked increase in staff participation in wellbeing and safety-related training in 2025, particularly through Health, Safety and Wellbeing programmes that focus on early recognition and response to student and staff wellbeing concerns.
- Examples of staff training delivered by student services team are:
 - *Creating Rainbow Inclusive Learning Environments* professional development for teaching and support staff. Participants reflected on the context of takatāpui and rainbow tauira and its impact on their wellbeing, focusing on how the learning environment can enable these tauira to succeed.
 - *Understanding and Supporting International Students*, aimed to strengthen whole of provider care for international students, was delivered to professional and academic staff, alongside individual sessions for faculties and central service units.

Staff participation in Pastoral Care Code-related training

Training / workshop	Attendance (2025)	Delivering team
New Staff Welcome	178	Human Resources
Building Intercultural Competency	25	Human Resources
Engaging with Pasifika	23	Human Resources
Rainbow Awareness	17	Human Resources
Te Reo Māori	117	Human Resources
Tikanga Māori	82	Human Resources
Te Tiriti o Waitangi – Parts 1 & 2	89	Human Resources
Applying Te Tiriti o Waitangi	58	Human Resources

Ako	22	Human Resources
Rangahau	15	Human Resources
Sexual Harassment Response Policy and Procedures	50	Human Resources
New staff induction	230	Health, Safety and Wellbeing
Existing staff refresher induction	2034	Health, Safety and Wellbeing
Health, Safety and Emergency workshop	216	Health, Safety and Wellbeing
Staff Wellbeing workshop	88	Health, Safety and Wellbeing
Heartbeat	120	Health, Safety and Wellbeing
First Aid	111	Health, Safety and Wellbeing
Recognise, Respond and Refer	61	HSW with Tauria / Mauri Ora
Fire Warden	65	Health, Safety and Wellbeing
Fire Extinguisher	41	Health, Safety and Wellbeing
Supervisor development	124	Faculty of Graduate Research
Accommodation staff training	~100	Tauria—Student Interest

Completion of online training modules

Online training module	2023	2024	2025
Creating a Culture of Care	13	87	132
Fundamentals of Privacy	36	46	106

Outcome 2: Learner voice

Providers understand and respond to diverse learner voices and wellbeing and safety needs in a way that upholds their mana and autonomy.

Te Herenga Waka continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to student voice, and tauria and staff collaboration that supports the student experience and creates a culture of care. This occurs through tauria advisory roles, advocacy, co-design, consultation, decision-making, and student feedback.

Comment from VUWSA President 2026

I am pleased to see significant commitment to the gathering of student voice from Te Herenga Waka. The students' association has long been supported to build reliable and consistent structures where students have accessible avenues to voice concerns or provide feedback on current and/or proposed projects. An example of such a mechanism is the Student Assembly. Representatives from key stakeholder clubs/groups are brought together six times a year to discuss high level ongoings and outcomes on behalf of the student body. I want to commend the University for the rightful gravitas they place on the views and decisions made by the Student Assembly and other bodies. We appreciate the opportunity to hear directly from senior leaders at the University, such as the Vice-Chancellor, about topical issues that will leave a mark on every student, but crucially in forums that are led and approved by students. One example of such an issue is the requested feedback on the proposed Artificial Intelligence (AI) vision statement. Lastly, I want to

acknowledge the remuneration students receive for their time participating in engagement with the University through the Student Assembly. It is refreshing to see a genuine commitment to the principle that if a staff member is to be compensated for their time, then a student should be too, empowering students through a deep respect for their time and effort that goes beyond basic requirements.

Survey results

The *Have Your Say* survey is a central channel through which tauira are invited to share their experiences and perspectives on university life. Survey analysis supports decision-making at both operational and strategic levels and complements other learner voice mechanisms, such as student representative structures and engagement with the students' associations.

- In 2025, this survey received **5,017 responses**, representing a **26% response rate** of enrolled tauira. This response rate is considered strong for a voluntary, institution-wide online survey and provides a robust evidence base for monitoring student experience and wellbeing.
- The Student Voice theme reflects a vibrant, politically aware student body that wants to be heard, respected, and involved. Tauira are not just passive recipients of education, they are active participants in shaping the University's culture, policies, and public stance.
- **55% feel valued** as an individual and **56% feel opinions are valued** (52% and 54% in 2024 and 46% and 48% in 2023). While there has been some improvement since 2023 in responses to this question, it would be valuable to explore what might further shift these results.
- **79%** of survey respondents were **satisfied with their class representatives**, and tauira also had high levels of agreement that they were respected based on their religious beliefs, political beliefs, immigration background, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender, with **86%** who agreed that **sustainability was important to them**.

VUWSA Halls Committee

Structured approaches are used to incorporate student voice into accommodation decision-making. The VUWSA Halls Committee, led by the Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association (VUWSA), brought together elected representatives from all first-year halls with a remit to improve the student experience across all halls.

During 2025, the Committee successfully advocated for the provision of free sanitary products within halls and actively contributed to the Student Accommodation Catering Review. Engagement between accommodation management, the catering provider, and student representatives was strengthened through site visits to the central kitchen, increasing transparency and understanding of constraints.

Several student-led recommendations were implemented or scheduled for implementation in 2026:

- Introduction of low-sensory dining times in all catered halls;
- Improved advance communication of daily menu options;
- Provision of snacks outside scheduled mealtimes;
- Daily availability of eggs at breakfast; and
- Introduction of varied plate sizes to help tauira indicate portion size at the servery without having to ask for a larger portion.

Hall managers supported improved feedback loops by incorporating updates from resident committees and the VUWSA Halls Committee into regular hall newsletters. This enhanced visibility of student advocacy outcomes and reinforced confidence in student participation processes.

Learner complaints process

- The Tauria—Student Interest team consulted with the VUWSA and key University partners to identify opportunities to improve the accessibility of student complaints processes. As a result of this work, information relating to [complaints processes](#) on the university website was simplified and refreshed to enhance clarity and accessibility for tauria. Draft FAQs were also developed as internal resources, which may be provided to tauria seeking to make a complaint.
- Tauria—Student Interest will monitor engagement with the refreshed content, including access rates and usage of the online complaints form. Work is also underway to develop a plan to further promote the visibility of complaints processes across the institution. In addition, the team is progressing the development of a set of complaints process guidelines to support greater consistency in complaints handling across the university. This work will be subject to appropriate consultation.

Feedback, concerns and complaints

It's important you know how to provide feedback, raise concerns, or make a complaint during your studies. Explore what support is available to help you.

We want students to have a good experience at Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington, but sometimes things don't go as planned. We encourage you to come forward if you have feedback, want to raise a concern, or make a complaint.

You can speak up without fear of disadvantage. The University has clear, fair, and transparent resolution processes. Most concerns can be worked through simply and informally through self-resolution, but there are more formal pathways available if required.

You can seek confidential advice or help at any stage of the process from the [Tauria—Student Interest](#) team. They can help you explore your options, and speaking to them does not mean you're committing to making a complaint.

You can also receive support from [VUWSA Advocates](#), who are independent from the University.

If you're experiencing a problem, select from the three pathways below to find out what your options are for raising this with the University. If you are not sure what pathway to choose, you can fill in our [form](#) with a brief explanation of the issue, or you can request a meeting with a member of the [Tauria—Student Interest](#) team. No action will be taken until we have spoken to you about the pathway you would like to take.

Pathways for different types of concerns

There are three main pathways for raising concerns with the University, each suitable for a different type of issue as described below. If you are not sure what pathway to choose, use the [form](#) to briefly explain your issue or to request a meeting with a member of the [Tauria—Student Interest](#) team. This form goes to the Student Interest team, and we won't take any action until we have confirmed the pathway with you.

Academic appeals, complaints, and grievances

Use this pathway to address things like appealing a grade, lecture concerns, supervision, or any other problems or concerns with your academic studies.

Student services

You may need to raise concerns or make a complaint about student services. Find out more here.

Staff and student behaviour and conduct

There are resolution processes and support available if you need to raise concerns or make a complaint about inappropriate behaviour or conduct. Find out more.

There are services available to support you if you want to know more about our processes. You can also access support, including cultural support, by contacting the [Māori, Pasifika](#) or [International](#) student advisers.

External complaints processes

If you go through a university complaints process and are unsatisfied by the outcome of your complaint, there are further resolution options external to the University.

[Find out about the external complaints process >](#)

Outcome 3: Safe, inclusive and accessible physical and digital learning environment

Providers must foster learning environments that are safe and designed to support positive learning experiences of diverse learner groups.

Te Herenga Waka remains committed to maintaining an inclusive and supportive environment that enables all members of our community to thrive. Connection, Collaboration, and Community are highlighted in the University's [strategic plan](#), and these priorities underpin a proactive approach to supporting members of our diverse tauira communities.

- The Āwhina team facilitated several specialised academic wānanga and study skills workshops tailored to each faculty. The role of the Kaiakiaki (Māori Engagement Advisers) was pivotal in offering one-on-one appointments and drop-in sessions to help **tauira Māori** navigate university processes. Te Waihangā Hononga initiative continued, focusing on connections for tauira at all stages of their cultural journey - from those just beginning to connect with their taha Māori to those immersed in te reo.
- Through its team of advisers, Pasifika Student Success delivered culturally responsive pastoral care to support the social, educational, emotional, and cultural needs of **Pasifika students**. This culturally responsive pastoral care is designed to enhance the experience for Pasifika students at Te Herenga Waka with the view to strengthening their academic success. The 7 Advisers recorded 1734 engagements in Kurawai (University CRM) over Trimester 1 and Trimester 2 2025. This engagement included connecting tauira to services, advocating on their behalf, and working with Titoko—Student Success to advise on academic matters. The team also organised a range of events from orientation to Loto Aho study sessions, Pasifika Week, and Pasifika graduation celebration.
- Te Amaru—Disability Services introduced Support Navigators to help meet growing demand and ensure **disabled students** are well connected across the University. The introduction of these roles reduced service wait times from four weeks to one week. The new roles also reduced the number of tauira requiring appointments with a Disability and Inclusion Adviser by 45%, allowing Advisers to focus more effectively on tauira with high and complex needs.
- There were numerous high-profile events for, and with, **rainbow students**. These included the Rainbow Students Welcome, which 89% of attendees found useful, up from 78% in 2024, and Pride Fest, a week-long programme for tauira and staff that show-cased available support and celebrated the strength of the University's rainbow community.
- In 2025, there was a 63% increase, compared with the prior year, in **refugee background students** attending one-on-one appointments with a Refugee Background Adviser. This growth demonstrates the University's proactive engagement with the refugee student cohort.
- Three main orientations and a further seventeen special orientations (special cohorts, late and early arrivals) were held for **international students** across the year to meet specific needs and ensure they were well prepared for study and life in Aotearoa. 97% of international tauira found the Getting Connected session useful and 96% of respondents found Uni Crew student ambassadors helpful.

- Opportunities for international tauira to engage with te ao Māori were further developed in 2025 - Pōhiri for international tauira, along with a redesigned cultural session to introduce tikanga Māori, were held during orientation weeks across the year for approximately 750 new tauira. Manaaki New Zealand Scholarship orientation for 65 new scholars included sessions on te reo Māori and Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and visits to the He Tohu, Te Tiriti exhibition and an educational session at the National Library. The Wairarapa fieldtrip for 86 scholars incorporated a session with a Māori educator, where tauira learnt about traditional Māori food sources, significant local landmarks, and their connection to whakapapa and pūrākau.
- A range of events and activities for international tauira were delivered, based on student requests, identified trends and working alongside colleagues, and student groups such as Victoria International Students' Association and the Postgraduate Students' Association. These events reached nearly 1,800 tauira and included a free day at the zoo, AI on Campus, meet-ups for American tauira, mental health awareness activities, visa information sessions delivered by immigration advisers and several activities via the peer-to-peer support International Buddy Programme.
- Feedback from **residents living in student accommodation** in response to a Halls survey was positive:
 - 96% of residents felt safe in their student accommodation, 1% felt unsafe and the remainder felt neither safe nor unsafe.
 - 85% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with their residential experience overall, 5% were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied and the remaining 10% were neither satisfied nor unsatisfied.
 - 87% of first year hall respondents were satisfied with the level of contact with their Residential Adviser, while 12% would have liked more contact and 1 percent would have liked less.

Survey results

Have Your Say includes indicators related to Outcome 3 of the Code, including tauira perceptions of:

- Physical safety on campus
 - **87%** agreed that they **felt safe** at this University in 2025 (86% in 2024 and 84% in 2023)
- Freedom from discrimination, harm, or hatred
 - Currently there is no question in *Have Your Say* to measure this, but the planned redesign of this survey for 2026 does include a question to start measuring this.
- Feeling respected regardless of ethnicity, culture, gender, sexuality, religion, age, or other identities
 - On average **80%** of students agreed to **feeling respect shown** regardless of disability, sexual orientation, religion, politics, immigration background, gender and ethnicity (79% in 2024 and 77% in 2023) see Table 1 below for full details
- The extent to which diversity and inclusion are valued and promoted
 - **87%** agreed **diversity and inclusion** was important to them, and **85%** agreed it was important to the University (86% and 81% in 2024 and 87% and 78% in 2023)

- The accessibility and effectiveness of physical and digital learning environments:
 - In 2025, overall satisfaction with **services and facilities** was high, with **82% of students** rating them as *good* or *very good*. This provides evidence that the University's learning and support environments are broadly experienced as supportive and fit for purpose.
 - Physical learning environment
 - **12%** reported **poor study environments** as a barrier to success 'Very often or Often' (12 % in 2024 and 18% in 2023)
 - **76%** satisfied with **classrooms** (75% in 2024 and 76% in 2023)
 - **89%** satisfied with the **libraries** (88% in 2024 and 88% in 2023)
 - Digital learning environment
 - **82%** agreed **technology helps** them achieve their academic outcomes (84% in 2024 and 85% in 2023)
 - **89%** satisfied with **Nuku (Online Learning Environment)** (86% in 2024 and 82% in 2023)

Qualitative Insights

"Overall, my experience at Te Herenga Waka has been rewarding, with supportive staff and a vibrant learning environment. I appreciate the University's efforts to listen to student feedback and make improvements. Continued focus on enhancing inclusivity, mental health support, and practical learning opportunities would make the experience even better for all students."

"Overall, my experience at Victoria University of Wellington has been positive. I've appreciated the support from staff, the learning resources, and the opportunities to grow both academically and personally."

"Being a student here has been amazing so far. I love all my courses, I love the space, I love the people I get to meet. I appreciate the academic community that has been created here."

"Studying here has been both challenging and rewarding. While there have been moments of stress and adjustment, I truly appreciate the supportive academic environment and the opportunities to grow both personally and professionally. I'm grateful to be part of this journey."

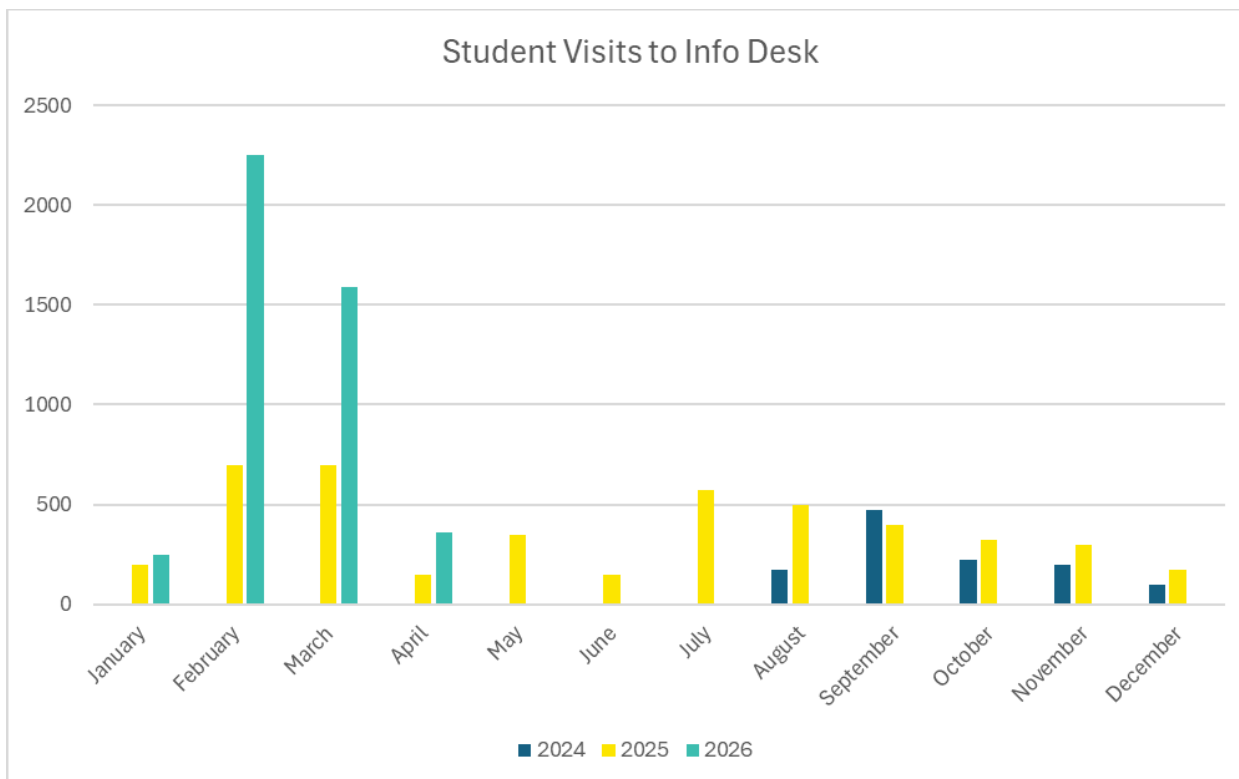
"I appreciate most how friendly and personable all of my lecturers and tutors have been. It made me relax and not feel afraid to have questions."

Integrated student services

Working together to support taura success using an integrated approach has long been an integral part of the way student services teams collaborate.

- In 2025, a strengthened in-person presence was piloted at the Kelburn campus hub, building on existing service delivery. This Info Desk physical space is a centrally located, visible front door for student support, designed to bring together key student-facing services in one accessible environment. It functions as the primary point of contact for students seeking guidance, information, or referral across academic, administrative and wellbeing-related matters.
- In addition to triage and referral, the Info Desk hosts a range of student support functions aligned to the student lifecycle and varying levels of need - including ongoing services such as IT Service Desk and Justices of the Peace, regular drop-in supports such as Te Taiako-Student Learning sessions, and targeted or seasonal services such as Student Finance, at key pressure points during the academic year. By creating a shared and recognisable service environment, the model supports early intervention, seamless triage, and clearer pathways to specialist support where required.

- Foot traffic data demonstrated sustained utilisation of the Info Hub as a primary point of contact for student support. Year-on-year trends show consistent engagement across peak and non-peak periods, and a marked increase in February and March 2026, indicating ongoing demand for a centralised, in-person service environment and supporting timely connection to appropriate services.



- Using insights from this pilot, Property Services, tauira, and student services teams partnered on detailed functional design for a physical Info Hub space with a deliberate focus on accessibility, functionality, futureproofing, and ensuring the space remains flexible in both concept and design as service needs evolve. Delivery of the new Info Hub physical space is scheduled for the mid-2026.

Transition and Retention

- Good progress was made towards strengthening a pan-university approach to first-year retention. A Transition Oversight Group was established to ensure alignment of programmes and activities during the orientation period (three weeks before and after the start of classes). This Oversight Group provides guidance on the development and implementation of programmes that support the successful transition of tauira into university life.

Tau Mai week in first-year halls

- In 2025, Tau Mai Week was introduced as a structured, week-long transition programme for first-year hall residents. Activities were designed to help give tauira a solid foundation to begin their first year of study and to settle into their new hall and home in Wellington City.

- First-year hall residents moved in one week prior to the commencement of New Students' Orientation and O'Week, enabling tauira to establish social connections and develop a sense of belonging before the academic year commenced. The programme comprised approximately two hundred events and was delivered through coordinated cross-functional collaboration involving accommodation services and wider university partners.
- Feedback from residents, staff, and whānau indicated that Tau Mai Week contributed positively to tauira transition and wellbeing. Additionally, participation in inter-hall activities increased over the course of the academic year, suggesting sustained engagement benefits. Based on these outcomes, Tau Mai Week has been embedded as a standard component of the first-year hall calendar.

Postgraduate learning opportunities

In 2025, the Faculty of Graduate Research (FGR) offered a wide range of tailored learning opportunities designed to support both research students and academic supervisors. These events provided a platform for knowledge exchange, and a space to foster community, encouraging the sharing of insights and best practices among peers.

- To ensure a strong start for newly enrolled PhD candidates, there were three mandatory induction sessions that offered guidance on thriving and surviving the PhD journey. These sessions provided practical tips, tricks, and essential information, supporting 240 newly enrolled tauira as they embarked on their doctoral studies.
- Other activities included workshops, writing bootcamps, and personalised individual support, with strong engagement reflected in 1,169 attendees at workshops and 452 at bootcamps.

He Kokonga Whare e Kitea

He Kokonga Whare e Kitea is a two-year (2025–26) TEC-funded partnership between Te Herenga Waka and the University of Canterbury, designed both to embed a sustainable University-wide approach to student success and create a system-wide blueprint for learner success across Aotearoa. In 2025, there was extensive engagement with the University community, including an institutional survey, two university-wide workshops, and a structured design process delivered through four workstreams: Tūāpapa (data), Tāhuhu (curriculum), Heke (student journeys), and Tukutuku (organisational culture). Going forward, transition, retention and progression initiatives will be connected to the He Kokonga Whare e Kitea Student Success Plan.

Te Pātaka Kōrero-Library

- The University Library welcomed almost 1.4 million people to the libraries across campuses in 2025. This equates to an increase of 70,028 visitor entries compared to 2024. While Pipitea campus libraries had similar visitation results for 2024 and 2025, notable increases occurred at Kelburn library (up by 52,864) and Architecture & Design library (up by 17,851). Visitations reflect that our libraries are popular study spaces for tauira as they offer a range of spaces for different learning needs and are safe, warm and inclusive.
- Library spaces and support continue to evolve to respond to tauira needs, including improvements to physical spaces which are informed by user experience (UX) methods. For example, UX methods were used to gather suggestions and feedback from tauira at Kelburn Library as it underwent a series of

enhancements across multiple levels. Refurbishments included updated furniture, soundproof booths for tauira who need a very quiet space or to decompress, and improved signage. Efforts also addressed furniture maintenance and storage needs.

- Collaboration with Digital Solutions has enabled ongoing improvements to library technology, including printer upgrades and expanded access to docking stations for tauira.

User experience of systems

Digital Solutions leads several projects and initiatives that improve the student experience and contribute to the requirements of the Code. Projects, outcomes and benefits and 2025 progress are described in the table below:

Project/Initiative	Target outcomes and benefits	2025 comments
Enrolment Transformation Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission enhancements • Replacing the existing enrolment system • Student visa and photo management improvements <i>(multi-year project scheduled for 2026 completion)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved student experience through the admission and enrolment • Providing clarity on programme requirements at admission • Students have more flexibility and ownership over their study • Faster turnaround for admission changes • More user-friendly enrolments process Reduction in administrative burden for staff, allowing them to provide more holistic outreach support to students	The first year of the project focused on improvements to the admission form and related processes in line with a more streamlined admission and enrolment journey. Key changes: Added 2 nd major selection to the form, including outside majors. Improved UI to provide clearer information to applicants. Initial analysis for the new enrolment system
Panoho – Candidature management Centralised system to improve visibility of the research student journey and supporting the student/supervisor relationship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving visibility of research student journey and ownership over their study options • Single place for managing a student's candidature • Ability to track change requests 	Completed Sept 2025 Key benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accessible to candidate, supervisors, administration and examiners • tracks each individual candidate's unique journey • Milestone, checkpoints and goal tracking provides oversight of progress • integrates with existing University systems: data is reliable and up to date • candidates and supervisors can easily record supervision meetings • progression monitoring and reporting • online forms with automated approval workflows • easy to track progress of requests

Work-integrated learning platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students experience clear, consistent and well-supported work-integrated learning • Improved quality and value of placements and internships • Centralised systems and processes to provide better data and insights, enabling continuous improvement. • Work integrated learning contributes more directly to student success, retention, and employability outcomes. 	2025/2026 System is in use by all faculties, but continues to be rolled out more granularly.
Upgrade/replacement of University information screens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance communication channels advertising services and support for students, including displaying Metlink bus timetables • Digital signage to improve visibility of the Student InfoDesk Hub to connect students to services and support 	Completed, including displaying Metlink bus timetables
Multifactor authentication for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve security of student accounts, personal information and documents 	Completed

Outcome 4: Learners are safe and well

Providers must support learners to manage their physical and mental health through information and advice, and identify and respond to learners who need additional support.

The update on Ki te rā—Student Wellbeing Outcomes Framework in the section about Outcome 1 in this report, describes a range of actions taken to support learners to manage their physical and mental health.

In addition to this, **Mauri Ora—Student Health and Counselling** strengthened its support for tauira through focused improvements across access, early identification, targeted support, and clinical safety:

- **Earlier engagement and preventative support**
Tauira increasingly accessed health and counselling services earlier, including prior to the start of Trimester 1. This shift supported preventative intervention and helped tauira put support in place before periods of peak academic pressure.
- **Responsive pathways for tauira with increased and complex needs**
Mauri Ora responded to sustained demand and greater complexity in tauira presentations by expanding same-day and priority counselling pathways and strengthening triage across health and counselling. Tauira Māori showed increased use of early and priority access options.

- **Targeted support for neurodiverse taura**

A nurse-led ADHD pre-screening pathway was further developed, alongside the introduction of ADHD support groups and psycho-educational workshops delivered with Te Taiako—Student Learning. These initiatives improved access to timely information, practical strategies, and appropriate referral, reducing barriers to assessment and ongoing support.

- **Strengthened safety and quality assurance**

Mauri Ora maintained robust clinical governance and multidisciplinary care, including embedded social work support in student accommodation. In 2025, the service successfully completed the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners' Foundation Standard audit, providing external assurance of safe, high-quality, and equitable clinical care.

[Student Finance](#), [Te Ratonga Rapu Mahi-Careers and Employment](#) and [VUWSA](#) collaborated to address the impact of cost of living pressures and taura concerns about reduced employment opportunities.

- Student Finance saw an increase in taura proactively developing their financial literacy and budgeting skills, with an increase in student advice appointments from 448 in 2024 to 492 in 2025.
- In collaboration with VUWSA, Student Finance Advisers continued to run the Winter Clothing Drive (third year) and the Kitchenware Collective (second year) with staff donations distributed to taura with a need.
- The Winter Energy Grant, established in July 2023, saw a marked increase in applications in 2025 indicating high need for this type of financial support.
- In response to taura concerns about the compressed labour market and pressures facing students and graduates, VUWSA ran a 'Where's the work?' campaign. To complement this, Careers and Employment and VUWSA designed a collaborative expo-style activation which allowed careers staff to provide targeted employability support alongside organisations like Student Job Search.
- Opportunities for taura to develop employability skills through cocurricular opportunities were strengthened in 2025 with the development of the [Kitea Impact Programme](#), which builds on the Te Herenga Waka's long-standing leadership programmes, and is offered from 2026. This whakatauki inspires the programme:

E kitea ai ngā taonga o te moana, me māku koe—To see the treasures of the ocean, you must get wet

Several initiatives in **Te Kopanga—Student Accommodation** trialled new approaches:

Pastoral care and differentiated support for mature taura residing in self-catered accommodation

To strengthen after-hours pastoral support, a central after-hours hub was established following the opening of 222 Willis Hall. This enabled a more coordinated and consistent approach to after-hours staffing and incident response for residents across independent living accommodation. Additionally, a 'casual pool' model was trialled for covering overnight staff absence and to support the overnight team during peak periods. Learnings from this trial have been implemented in 2026.

The events and engagement model for Independent Living residents was reviewed and adjusted. Programming shifted from hall-specific activities to a broader programme accessible to residents across multiple sites. This change was associated with increased taura participation and expanded opportunities for peer connection, particularly for taura in their second year of study and beyond.

Staff–Student Engagement Model

Feedback from residents, Residential Advisers (RAs), and Community Advisers (CAs) in 2024 indicated that the existing structured fortnightly check-in model was not proportionate to tauira needs and imposed a high administrative burden. In response, the staff engagement model was revised in 2025 to focus on targeted check-ins aligned with key points in the academic calendar (e.g. transition, assessment periods, break periods and end-of-year).

This revised approach was supported by coordinated newsletter communications and aligned with broader University wellbeing messaging, including promotion of new Wellbeing Kete resources. Tauira and staff reported that the revised model was more effective and meaningful, and it has been retained with refinements for 2026.

Live out Residential Adviser (RA) Pilot

A pilot initiative was implemented in one first-year hall allowing a proportion of returning RAs to live outside the hall. The pilot was monitored in 2025 for impacts on student experience and RA wellbeing. Findings indicated no adverse impact on student experience, while RAs participating in the live-out arrangement reported improved wellbeing. As a result, a mixed live-in/live-out RA model has been retained for 2026 with minor refinements, with expansion to additional first-year halls planned for 2027.

Conclusion

The 2025 reporting period reflects a university with a mature, embedded, and continuously improving whole-of-provider pastoral care system.

Strategic frameworks are well integrated, partnerships are strong, and decision-making is increasingly informed by robust evidence and student voice. These foundations enable Te Herenga Waka to respond proactively and effectively to the evolving needs of its diverse student community.

Overall, the University provides strong assurance of its sustained commitment to the Code and to delivering safe, inclusive, and high-quality learning environments that support the wellbeing and success of all tauira.