



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF
WELLINGTON
TE HERENGA WAKA

From Tertiary to Secondary: What We're Learning About Student Success Across the Education System

Or...

Transitions from Secondary to Tertiary: co-creating successful student journeys

Professor Karen Smith

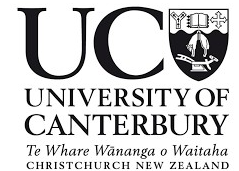
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He Kokonga Whare e Kitea

The corners of a house can be seen or examined



Building an **organisation-wide approach** to student success through:

- Developing and testing a **data-informed** and strengths-based approach that integrates current initiatives that accelerate student success at an institutional-wide level.
- Empowering academic and professional staff to **effectively use data and evidence**, ultimately improving student outcomes across the institution.
- Creating a **system-wide blueprint** for learner success across Aotearoa New Zealand.



What does student success mean to you?



What Student Success means at Te Herenga Waka



Themes from our korero with University staff in the He Kokonga Whare e Kitea project

- **Belonging & Community**

Students feel connected, authentic, and supported throughout their journey, including after graduation.

- **Equity, Diversity & Inclusion**

Success for all students regardless of background, economic status, or prior experience; valuing Māori and Pasifika, international, neurodiverse, and postgraduate needs.

- **Holistic Success & Wellbeing**

Academic achievement plus personal, social, cultural, and financial well-being; fostering intellectual curiosity and psychological safety.

- **Empowered Student Agency & Voice**

Giving students tools, data, and clarity to define their own success; actively including student voice through surveys and co-design.

- **Clear, Inclusive & Transformative Curriculum**

Curriculum that is relevant, accessible, and easy to navigate; embedding equity and real-world meaning.

- **Smooth Transitions & Real-World Preparation**

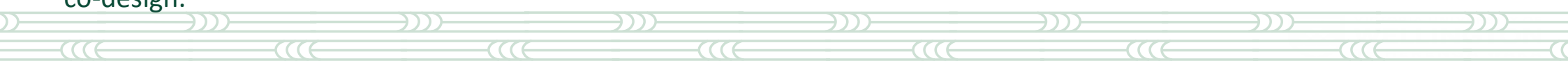
Supporting onboarding and school-to-university transitions; providing work-integrated learning opportunities and employability skills.

- **Removing Barriers & Simplifying Processes**

Addressing practical challenges (transport, resources, financial pressures) and reducing unnecessary complexity.

- **Data-Driven & Sustainable Improvement**

Using analytics to identify issues, measure impact, and create long-term solutions rather than one-off fixes.



What Student Success means at Te Herenga Waka



Belonging ♦ Achieving ♦ Thriving

A Working Definition

Student success at Te Herenga Waka means enabling every learner to belong, achieve, and thrive - academically, personally, socially, and culturally - through connected systems, equitable support, and data-informed practice.

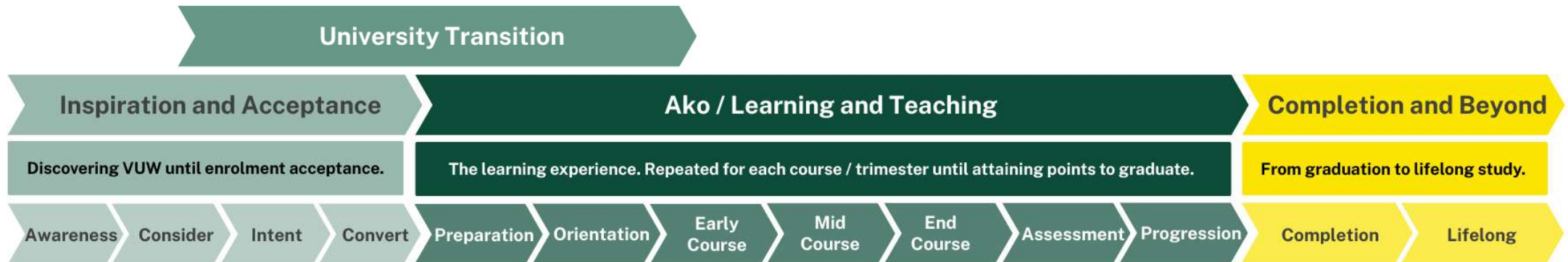


“Student success links two concepts - students obtaining a sense of belonging and connection and stability...and then taking this confidence out to the world. ”

Professor Nic Smith, Vice-Chancellor, Te Herenga Waka

<https://youtu.be/pfJb33xfcok>

Learner Journey Mapping



Critical Transition Phase

The move from secondary to tertiary education greatly impacts student success, and is often challenging, even for high achievers.

Acknowledge Jonny Flutey, Manager, Student Retention Initiatives, VUW

How can we better connect and collaborate to create successful transitions for students?

- Foundational maths and academic writing skills → Bridging courses
 - University terminology and jargon → interactive experiences to guide students in enrolment and course selection
 - Some students change their degree or course selection as they progress through their qualification → Curriculum design, taster courses and flexible pathways
- He Kokonga Whare e Kitea – using data to inform the design of interventions and initiatives, equipping our staff to access and use data, and monitoring impacts for long-term sustainability and accelerated student success