

## Unitec New Zealand Limited

### Unitec Academic Board Meeting

26 August 2020

<b>Title</b>	Academic Risk Management
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<b>For:</b>	For Discussion

### Recommendation

That the Academic Board:

discuss the latest Academic Risk report, and the actions being taken as per the Memorandum to the Quality Alignment Board; and

advise any further actions the Academic Board requires to be undertaken to provide assurance that academic Risk is being effectively managed.

### Purpose

To report to the Academic Board on the management and oversight of Academic Risk and seek feedback on any actions to improve the management of risk at Unitec.

### Key Points

- Development of effective Academic Risk management at Unitec has been ongoing, with the latest approach in place since early 2020
- At the August QAB a review of the collated risk ratings was considered along with comments from the quarterly PAQC Chairs' reports
- QAB adopted the recommendations put forward by the Academic Risk Working Group
- There has been an overall reduction in the collective level of risk across Unitec Programmes

### Commentary

At the 19 August meeting of the Quality Alignment Board the *August 2020 Academic Risk Summary* report with recommendations from the Academic Risk Working Group were received. A copy of the Memo, and associated papers and recommendations which were subsequently adopted, are appended.

In undertaking the evaluation of the programme level risks across the institute, the Academic Risk Working Group utilised the PAQC Chairs' reports to provide insight to, and assurance of, those risks

which are rated highest across the institute. To support the appended QAB memorandum, and to provide some insight into PAQC practice, the *Risk section* of the thematic summary of the PAQC Chairs' reports is copied verbatim below:

### **Summary of PAQC Chairs reports – Risk section**

Risk registers are being viewed as a meaningful tool for PAQCs to monitor the health of their programmes. APMs have shifted to reporting within meetings on the changes that have occurred to the registers since the last meeting and engaged the PAQC in validating their decisions.

Key risk areas that were focused on during the last period were primarily Covid-19 related with concern about the quality of the student experience of on-line learning and the disruption to learning sequences for many students.

Some PAQCs noted their anxiety regarding extensions and deferment of student grades following lock-down. This ranged from simple concern about student engagement through to extreme concern around a lack of clinical work-placements, apprenticeships and performance opportunities. It was noted that an associated workload risk has arisen due to out of standard sequence of assessment marking, grading, completions, etc. There is an ongoing concern that future targets may not be met because of this.

The Engineering PAQC also reported that there is a risk associated with the enforced delay of National Examinations that were mandated by the NZBED without consultation and which resulted in a knock-on effect of starting Semester 2 on time.

Many programmes noted the risk associated with a drop in international EFTS as a result of closed borders.

Some PAQCs have also noted that the risks associated with declining EFTS has shifted to a risk associated with increasing EFTS and their ability to deliver to larger than expected cohorts. This includes students transferring from Sem 1 to Sem 2 because of Covid, as well as the increase in new enrolments for specific areas, especially Trades and other Certificates and Diplomas. The risk is specifically related to teacher and physical resources.

The two Creative Industries PAQCs provided considerable feedback about the ongoing risk associated with deteriorating facilities and inadequate resources.

There is a continued risk associated with expiring programmes regarding staffing and resourcing.

## **Background**

The effective management and oversight of Academic Risk has been a requirement of Academic Board for some time. The development of a specific academic risk register commenced in late 2018 with the risk register going through a number of iterations prior to the current approach, adopted in April 2020.

The current approach requires the consideration of 14 academic risk areas (12 for all programmes, 2 additional risk areas relating to specific programmes) for each programme. The appended *Programme-Level-Risk-Areas* details the programme risk areas and the factors which contribute to each. Each programme has its own risk register (an excel sheet) which feeds through to a [PowerBI dashboard](#).

There is a clear process for the institutional academic risk management process (appended). The process requires each APM to review, and if necessary update, the risk register for each programme within the first five working days of each month. This timeframe ensures that the review of the risks

at an institute level can be completed with confidence in the currency of the ratings, and hence support effective decision making. This has been one of the most significant challenges, both in technical terms (exacerbated by off campus work and the difficulty of H drive access) and APM workload. APMs are also expected to ensure their programme risk registers are updated prior to each PAQC meeting.

Following the update, the Academic Risk Working Group considers the summary risks and makes recommendations to the Quality Alignment Board. One of the key challenges with this approach is the lack of insight into the risks which the register provides. This is offset somewhat by the PAQC Chairs' quarterly reports, which require, amongst other reporting, to summarise the most significant risks and the extent to which these are being effectively managed.

The Academic Risk Working Group is currently considering how to improve this aspect of the reporting framework, as well as the timing of the APM review/update. Feedback from the majority of APMs is that they would prefer the register to be updated for each PAQC meeting (typically six-weekly) rather than the current once a month approach. The cost-benefit of revising the reporting cycle are still being worked through.

PAQCs are accountable for overseeing the effective management of Academic Risk for the programme. PAQCs are able to determine their own processes regarding their assurance around academic risk. They are encouraged to actively discuss the risks associated with their programmes and to hold APMs to account for the effective management of programme risks. This means challenging the rating of a particular risk area and gaining assurance that appropriate actions are being undertaken to mitigate risks. Where actions are required, the PAQC is expected to make these clear and track them through to completion. An *APM to PAQC Risk action report SAMPLE* (appended) has been developed and distributed to PAQCs for this purpose. PAQCs which have adopted this report (it's optional) have noted the value of it. Further support is offered to PAQCs via hands-on training from Te Korowai Kahurangi and through the monthly PAQC Chairs' hui facilitated by the Chair of the Quality Alignment Board.

## Attachments

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- QAB Memo - Academic Risk 20200817
  - o August 2020 Academic Risk Summary with recommendations 20200817
  - o APM to PAQC Risk action report SAMPLE
- Risk-management-process
- Programme-Level-Risk-Areas

Further information is available on the Nest: <https://thenest.unitec.ac.nz/TheNestWP/teaching-and-research/te-korowai-kahurangi/governance-2/academic-risk/>