



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato ki Te Ao

International Plan 2025 - 2029

He Timatanga / Introduction

The International Plan is intended to provide a roadmap for internationalisation that supports the strategic goals of the University of Waikato. Areas of priority include student recruitment, research collaboration and partnerships, transnational education (TNE), international student experience and global citizenship.

As we work to expand our international reach and reputation; and to ensure a sustainable future for the institution, we must be strategic in where we invest our time and resources.

He Whakamārama / Background

The previous International Plan, approved in early 2019, was developed when the University was achieving significant success with regards to international education across much of its core business. The Plan aimed to embed internationalisation activity further across the institution, recognising that in some areas the University was well ahead of its peers but for other areas there was a need to lay a solid foundation for future success. Unfortunately, due to the closure of the New Zealand borders in early 2020, the University's ability to fully execute the *2019-2022 International Plan* was severely limited.

In developing the new International Plan, it is important to acknowledge the significant changes that have occurred. The pandemic reshaped the international education landscape in New Zealand and prompted a reassessment of the goals outlined in the previous Plan. It became necessary to redefine what recovery would mean in a transformed environment—one in which postgraduate study is increasingly preferred, government policy challenges persist, and institutions are operating in a more financially constrained context.

Our new international plan takes these changes into account and aligns with, '*Kia Haere Whakamua*', the new University Vision and Strategy 2025-2029.

Te Tirohanga Whānui / Vision

The University of Waikato will be recognised as a global leader for excellence, innovation and impact in teaching and research; and for providing a high-quality international student experience. By fostering global connectivity through 'Ko Te Tangata' (For the People), we will support our communities, students, world-class academics, staff and our alumni.

We will achieve this through:

- Building culturally diverse campuses in Tauranga and Hamilton by increasing the number of international students enrolled in a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.
- Being known for an outstanding international student experience that drives success and lifelong connection with the University.
- Equipping graduates with the capabilities, intercultural understanding and work-readiness to contribute to Aotearoa New Zealand and thrive in a globally connected world.
- Providing staff, students and our partners with the opportunity to engage with Mātauranga Māori, creating a foundation for global citizenship.
- Building global research partnerships that generate meaningful, measurable impact by addressing shared global challenges and aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Supporting the development of strategic international partnerships, including those with governments, media, funding agencies and international alumni that add value and support the advancement of the University of Waikato's goals and global reputation.
- Supporting the growth of existing and new transnational education (TNE) opportunities in targeted regions.

Ngā Whāinga me Ngā Kaupapa / Objectives and Themes

To achieve our Vision, we have identified four cross-cutting themes: innovation, cultural diversity, sustainability, and collaboration. These themes represent the core values of this International Plan and will be embedded across all objectives and actions, guiding everything we do to ensure we achieve long term success.

Innovation drives us to stay relevant and adaptable. It is key to attracting diverse students and partners, generating impactful international research and developing programmes that respond to the evolving needs of learners.

Cultural Diversity promotes inclusivity, enriches learning and prepares staff and students to thrive in a global world. Embracing cultural diversity also supports the integration of Te Ao Māori and the Kīngitanga into the University's internationalisation efforts and ensures that the University can build a rich community that celebrates cultural differences.

Sustainability ensures that environmental, social and economic considerations are integrated into all areas of the University's operations. It drives us to make meaningful contributions to the UN's SDG's

and inspires staff and students to become responsible global citizens who are committed to building a sustainable future.

Collaboration emphasises the value of developing strong, mutually beneficial partnerships that enhance our ability to attract more opportunities, create innovative solutions and make progress in addressing shared challenges.

Underpinning these four themes are six objectives. These objectives provide clear and measurable outcomes that guide our actions and help us to translate the broader themes into tangible results. They outline the specific outcomes that we aim to achieve.

- Objective 1:** Grow international student enrolments and campus diversity
- Objective 2:** Support international students to thrive academically, socially, and culturally
- Objective 3:** Enhance global citizenship through learning, cultural engagement, and international experiences.
- Objective 4:** Progress global research impact through collaboration and alignment with the SDGs
- Objective 5:** Focused development of TNE opportunities.
- Objective 6:** Enhancing reputation through strategic partnerships and global engagement

Diagram 1: Internationalisation Framework



Te Rautaki / Approach

Our staff are central to the success of this International Plan. Our approach embeds their expertise, global outlook and engagement across all areas — from curriculum to research to partnerships and student experience. Enabling our staff to contribute meaningfully to our internationalisation goals is critical to achieving the objectives of this plan.

These efforts are guided by six objectives, which form the framework for delivering the ambitions set out in this International Plan.

OBJECTIVE 1 – Grow international student enrolments and campus diversity

Building culturally diverse campuses in Tauranga and Hamilton will offer significant benefits to the University. International students bring a vibrancy to our communities and enrich our classrooms by sharing their cultural experiences, knowledge and perceptions as well as contributing significantly to our financial sustainability. We will recruit purposefully to balance our international student numbers appropriately across programmes and ensure that we are targeted in our approach but remain sufficiently flexible to adapt to changes.

What will we do to achieve this objective?

- Grow the number of international students studying University of Waikato programmes by utilising a multichannel approach to recruitment including digital, face-to-face, in-country staff, alumni, agents, pathway providers and partners.
- Prioritise market diversification to manage risk and to ensure a sustainable recruitment pipeline.
- Use data-driven insights to strengthen conversion activity by identifying and targeting areas with the highest potential for success.
- Continue to identify and work with key stakeholders internally to reduce barriers to growth in international student recruitment.
- Continue to build taught postgraduate programmes that are informed by market research to ensure they meet the needs of employers, reflect international student demand and fit within our areas of academic expertise.
- Grow the number of international students studying at our Tauranga campus by ensuring it offers distinctive and attractive programmes and can deliver a high-quality and supportive international student experience.

Outcomes will include:

- International students make up 25% of the total student enrolments across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.
- Increased numbers of students from a diverse range of countries, representative of the world's cultures, who study a range of programmes/disciplines in both Hamilton and Tauranga.
- 250 international students enrolled in Tauranga.
- An Increase in the number of taught Masters programmes enrolling international students.

OBJECTIVE 2: Support international students to thrive academically, socially and culturally

Our international students will feel welcome and thrive in an inclusive culture that supports their academic, social, cultural, and well-being needs in all aspects of their student experience, fostering a lifelong connection to the University of Waikato.

What will we do to achieve this objective?

- Ensure international students have access to student services and academic support that meets their needs.
- Provide appropriate and effective orientation programmes for all cohorts of new international students that celebrate cultural diversity and introduce students to our special relationship with Māori and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Provide support for indigenous international students in ways that reflect both their cultural heritage and the values of tangata whenua.
- Enhance the capacity of accommodation options ensuring sufficient high-quality living to support the growing international student population.
- Provide opportunities for the sharing of good practice for staff teaching and supporting a diverse range of cultures to ensure they have the tools, knowledge and cultural competency to provide an inclusive learning environment.

Outcomes will include:

- Increased awareness and utilisation of the services available at the University to international students.
- Maintained high student success and retention rates evident through pass rate and retention data.
- Maintained or improved international student satisfaction as evidenced by international Student Barometer (ISB) survey results
- Indigenous international students are meaningfully connected with Māori students, staff and iwi
- Increased participation in student activities (clubs, sport, trips etc.) including those arranged for international students.
- More housing projects (or partnerships for housing) lead to a wider range of affordable and high-quality options for international students.
- Increased opportunities for sharing good practice and information that aims to support staff teaching students from different cultures.

OBJECTIVE 3: Enhance global citizenship through learning, cultural engagement and international experiences

We will provide a world-class education and student experience that develops highly skilled and culturally intelligent graduates who are sought after by employers globally.

What will we do to achieve this objective?

- Create more opportunities for international students and our partners to have meaningful intercultural experiences and engagement with Te Ao Māori.
- Increase the number of students participating in an overseas experience or experiences at Waikato that build awareness of global challenges and intercultural skills by addressing the barriers that deter participation (curriculum flexibility, financial, duration, availability and awareness).
- Provide opportunities for sharing good practice and resources for staff so they can support

students in developing cultural knowledge, global competence, and intercultural communication skills.

- Continue to develop our curriculum to ensure it is culturally diverse and globally relevant, aligned to the SDGs (where applicable) so that students build their intercultural skills and their understanding of global issues.

Outcomes will include:

- An increase in the number of students and partners that participate in Māori related papers and activities, including Te Ao Hurihuri.
- Positive results from the i-graduate surveys demonstrating appreciation and understanding of New Zealand culture.
- A 20% increase in the number of students participating in overseas experiences or experiences at Waikato that build awareness of global challenges and intercultural skills, including a greater proportion (%) of international experiences being taken by Māori and Pacific students.
- A better understanding of the papers and/or programmes aligned with the SDGs to provide greater opportunities for students to engage with global challenges.

OBJECTIVE 4: Progress global research impact through collaboration and alignment with the SDGs

We will enhance our global presence and impact through increased international research collaborations, leveraging our strengths to tackle global challenges aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our efforts aim to create positive outcomes for New Zealand and the communities we serve. To achieve this, we will diversify our research funding sources, focus on interdisciplinary research with impact, and align with key international funders such as Horizon Europe. Additionally, we will foster strategic partnerships with leading global institutions and industry leaders to amplify our research outcomes and drive innovation.

What will we do to achieve this objective?

- Communicate and provide support to academic staff in identifying and applying for international funding opportunities, including Horizon Europe.
- Build and strengthen collaborations with targeted global institutions and industry partners, including our portfolio of strategic partners.
- Encourage interdisciplinary research collaborations aligned with the SDGs and/or areas of national/international priority.
- Develop a Visiting Scholars' Programme that attracts leading international researchers to the University of Waikato and supports the University to build world leading research and impact.
- Provide our early career researchers and PhD students with opportunities to make global connections that will enable them to thrive in their research area.
- Attract more international PhD students, offering support during the on-boarding process to ensure they have connections and resources to thrive at the University.
- Expand support for PhD programmes with international partners to deepen research

collaboration and develop globally connected researchers

Outcomes will include:

- Increased engagement and research revenue from Horizon Europe and other international sources.
- Increased engagement and impact with leading international universities (including our strategic partners) and other key agencies (funding, government, industry etc.).
- An increase in the number of research projects completed annually that align with the SDGs.
- At least five leading international researchers hosted annually through the Visiting Scholars' Programme.
- Increased global engagement for early career researchers and PhD students with more participating in joint-research programmes or exchanges.
- Continued success in the THE Impact Ranking and QS Sustainability Ranking (top 200).
- Increased numbers of international PhD students enrolled in Hamilton and Tauranga.

OBJECTIVE 5: Focussed development of TNE opportunities

We will enhance our Trans-National Education (TNE) delivery to support growth, expand our offshore reputation and the university's financial sustainability. This will be achieved by being targeted in our approach to providing access to our programmes globally. Our programmes will be recognised for their excellence in global education and hold a strong reputation for their innovation and ongoing commitment to quality.

What will we do to achieve this objective?

- Maintain excellent educational delivery for our existing offshore global programmes at HZCU (formerly ZUCC), SISU, HEBUST, NEU and Hainan to ensure positive academic performance and student satisfaction.
- Identify opportunities to enhance the operational efficiencies of our TNE programmes so they continue to contribute financially without compromising quality.
- Identify new opportunities with our existing TNE partners for further programme development in areas of shared interest and expertise.
- Increase the number of students transferring to University of Waikato programmes through existing Guaranteed Credit Arrangements.
- Explore sustainable options to expand our global TNE portfolio.
- Increase the number of staff involved in/have experience in our TNE programs to ensure long-term sustainability.

Outcomes will include:

- Increased numbers of students enrolled and are retained in our offshore programmes at HZCU, SISU, HEBUST, NEU and Hainan.
- Consistent and high pass and completion rates that are benchmarked with our pass/completion rates in New Zealand.
- Improvement in the financial sustainability of our TNE programmes
- Further opportunities for growth and expansion are identified with existing partners.
- Increased numbers of students transfer to the University through guaranteed credit arrangements.

- At least one new substantial TNE/offshore delivery project is delivered.
- Increase in the number of staff contributing to/understanding of our TNE programmes.

OBJECTIVE 6: Enhancing reputation through strategic partnerships and global engagement

We will strengthen the University's global reputation through a coordinated University-wide approach that combines the development of strategic partnerships with targeted reputation-building initiatives. This includes the development of a global reputation strategy that showcases our research, teaching and values (aligned to the SDG's) to international audiences. We will continue to build a small number of multi-disciplinary, high impact strategic partnerships that promote innovation and collaboration and generate mutual value. These partnerships will expand our global reach, grow our influence and deliver meaningful academic and societal outcomes. By collaborating with institutions, governments, alumni and global networks, we will grow the university's visibility, credibility and connections in key international markets.

What will we do to achieve this objective?

- Continue to develop a small number of high-impact global strategic partnerships that reflect our strengths in teaching and research and create mutual value.
- Develop and implement a global reputation framework to highlight the global impact of our research and teaching, with a focus on alignment to the SDGs.
- Create a supportive environment that celebrates success of global connection and achievement and encourages staff to engage with our global partners.
- Build closer links with international governments, scholarship agencies and media to enhance our global reach and influence.
- Strengthen engagement with alumni to leverage their global networks and expertise, creating ongoing opportunities for connection and collaboration.

Outcomes will include:

- Our strategic partnerships are productive and provide tangible outcomes that will enhance our reputation, the quality and impact of our research, teaching and student experience.
- Our global ranking is maintained in the QS top 250, with more subjects ranked in the top 200.
- A connected alumni community that celebrates success, remains engaged and advocates for the University.
- Increased stories across multiple global platforms, showcasing the University of Waikato brand and the impact of our research and teaching, through alignment with the SDGs.

Te Whakatīnanatanga/ Implementation

The inclusion of 'Outcomes' under each objective ensures transparency and provides a benchmark for evaluating progress. These indicators support accountability across the University and reflect our commitment to achieving the priorities outlined in the International Plan.

An Implementation Plan will be drafted to build on the outcomes and identify starting points or baseline measures where these do not yet exist. This approach will ensure we can consistently track progress and assess impact over time.

Key Components of the Implementation Plan will include:

- Implementation Roadmap: A timeline with annual milestones to guide progress.
- Accountability Framework: Objectives have a designated lead and reporting pathway to ensure delivery and oversight.
- Data and Market Intelligence: A data led and evidence-driven approach informs decision making and responses to emerging trends. Strategic oversight of the Plan will be provided by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (International, Engagement and Partnerships) with support from the International and Engagement Office. We will work in partnership with relevant portfolios to support the implementation of each objective, ensuring alignment with the Plan and maintaining momentum across the University. Regular monitoring and review will enable us to track progress, respond to new opportunities or challenges, and ensure the Plan remains relevant and achievable.

Approved by Council

12 August 2025