Education Report: Enhancing student voice in tertiary education

To: Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education
Date: 24 April 2019
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Purpose

This report provides you with initial options that you may want to consider for further work to enhance student voice in New Zealand’s tertiary education sector.

Summary

Student voice is an important part of well-functioning tertiary education systems, in which feedback loops for student voice exist at all levels—ranging from individual classes to tertiary education institute (TEI) councils.

A strong student voice benefits both students and tertiary education organisations (TEOs). It can encourage better collaboration between students and TEOs, and improve student wellbeing and achievement through enhanced pastoral care and student welfare interventions.

Currently, student voice is varied across the tertiary system, with some TEOs, particularly universities, having stronger student voice than others. As such, New Zealand could benefit from a more structured, sustainable, and consistent approach to student voice, like that seen in the United Kingdom and Australia.

The options we have identified for further work are:

- Option One: Enhancing the status quo through changes to financial arrangements, increased guidance and support, and student voice audits.
- Option Two: Structural changes to strengthen student voice.
- Option Three: Establishing a national centre for student voice.
- Option Four: Repealing voluntary student membership.

Our initial assessment of the options, based on the key principles that underpin effective systems of student voice (i.e. Partnership, Inclusiveness, Consistency, Sustainability, and Grassroots to Governance) is that Option 1 (enhancing the status quo) and Option Three (establishing a national centre for student voice) provide a clear and coherent direction for future work on enhancing student voice in the tertiary education system.
Option One would give us the opportunity to build on the changes we have already made to strengthen student voice. Option Three would be more of a medium term goal as it may require legislative change and involves us working with the sector to develop and design a student voice initiative, along the lines of those already in place in the United Kingdom and Australia. Key agencies to work with in this process would include the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations (NZUSA), Ako Aotearoa, the Academic Quality Agency (AQA), and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).

Alongside this work, we will also contribute to the Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE). The RoVE presents an opportunity to establish strong and sustainable structures for student voice within the vocational education system. For example, student representation at the regional and national level of the proposed New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology (NZIST) will be necessary to help ensure that student voice can be effectively channelled up to the NZIST's national council. We will continue to work on this as the RoVE progresses.

Consultation

The NZUSA, AQA, and Ako Aotearoa have been consulted during the development of the ideas and options presented in this report.

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

a. indicate which of the following options for enhancing student voice across New Zealand's tertiary education sector you would like officials to undertake further work on:

(I) Option One: Enhancing the status quo through changes to financial arrangements, increased guidance and support, and student voice audits

   Yes / No

(II) Option Two: Structural changes to strengthen student voice

   Yes / No

(III) Option Three: Establishing a national centre for student voice

   Yes / No

(IV) Option Four: Repealing voluntary student membership

   Yes / No

b. note that as part of this further work we will also examine the cost, scope and timing implications of the option/s identified

   Noted
c. note that work on enhancing student voice is also being undertaken as part of the Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE) Noted

d. Proactively release the contents of this paper once related policy decisions, particularly regarding the RoVE, have been made publicly available Release/Not release

Shelley Robertson
Acting Group Manager
Tertiary Education
24 / 04 / 2019

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education
14 / 5 / 19

I think a combination of elements from options 1-3 could form a coherent package that moves away from the notion of "membership" and instead fosters a democratic approach to student voice within institutions and across the sector.
Background

A strong student voice is crucial in a learner-centric tertiary education system

1 Following a meeting you had with the New Zealand Union of Students’ Associations (NZUSA), we stated we would provide you with options for enhancing student voice in the tertiary education sector.

2 It is important that tertiary education organisations (TEOs) support student voice by encouraging and enabling their students to communicate their perspectives and recommendations for change. Domestic and international research and best practice demonstrate that strong student voice leads to better functioning educational institutes and enhanced educational journeys for learners.

3 While this paper focuses on enhancing student voice in the tertiary sector, this work has key interdependencies in the wider Education Work Programme. Among others, these include: the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) and any associated action plans; the Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE); and the Māori and the Pacific Education Plans. Information on the relevance of student voice to these key interdependencies is detailed in Annex One.

4 The RoVE, in particular, will have the greatest impact on student voice. There may be an opportunity to improve student voice in and across institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs), but how this will be organised, governed, and structured is yet to be confirmed. However, we intend to address student voice in the RoVE as part of our ongoing advice to you, particularly on the more detailed design of the New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology (NZIST).

Students are key stakeholders and their perspectives are important

5 The Government is committed to making students the centre of our tertiary education system and to strengthen their voice. It is important that TEOs support student voice by encouraging and enabling their students to communicate their perspectives and allow them greater input into the administration and delivery of tertiary education.

6 The benefits of student voice are three-fold:

- TEOs benefit from incorporating student voice into their quality assurance and enhancement processes because it enables them to refine their practices from the user’s perspective;
- students benefit from involvement as critical thinkers, innovators, communicators, and leaders regarding their own and other students’ education; and
- the partnership between students and TEOs can strengthen with greater opportunities for students and TEOs to work more collaboratively and transparently.

7 When done well, student voice is systematically inclusive – it captures every student’s voice, including those of minority groups. It is important to understand what effective student voice is, and how it works best, for learners from minority groups (including

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Māori, Pacific, and disabled students) to aid in enhancing their personal and educational experiences.

8 Student welfare and pastoral care are also important for student voice. Student voice, welfare, and pastoral care are key aspects of students' sense of belonging. There is an inherent relationship between the three; pastoral care supports student welfare, while student voice allows students to express their views on the support they receive. As such, any work on student voice should also consider student welfare and pastoral care.

9 In looking at domestic and international best practice around student voice, we have outlined five key principles that underpin an effective, efficient, and, equitable student voice. These principles are important to consider when working to enhance student voice. They include:

- **Partnership** – students, staff, and providers work together to ensure that student voice is respected and impactful.
- **Inclusiveness** – every student’s voice is valued and can be communicated and represented within their organisation and nationally.
- **Consistency** – student voice within all education providers is strong, supported, and follows best practice.
- **Sustainability** – processes and structures in place to ensure that student voice remains strong and supported over time.
- **Grassroots to Governance** – student voice input and student representation at all levels.

**Student voice in New Zealand’s tertiary education system**

10 There are currently several avenues for student voice at the national and organisational level in New Zealand’s tertiary sector.

**National level**

11 There are various membership bodies of local students' unions that provide representation and advocacy for students at the national level. These include: NZUSA; Te Mana Ākonga (TMA), the national Māori student body; New Zealand International Student’s Association (NZISA); and New Zealand Tongan Tertiary Students Association (NZTSA). Annex Two provides more information about these associations and their current member unions.

12 Of note, none of the national students' associations currently have comprehensive membership. This may be a flow-on effect of the impact voluntary student membership (VSM) had on local students’ association's income streams. For instance, several member associations withdrew from NZUSA after VSM’s implementation because of difficulties paying membership costs.

13 There is also national level student representation on some sector body’s councils and committees. For instance, there are student members on the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA²) Board, the Universities New Zealand Committee on University Academic Programmes, the Enhancement Theme Steering group for the

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² An agency that aims to contribute to the advancement of New Zealand university education by providing external academic quality assurance through regular audits (every 7-8 years).
AQA’s upcoming Cycle 6 Academic Audit of universities, and the Ako Aotearoa\textsuperscript{3} Pacific People’s and Māori Caucuses.

Various sector body agencies, especially Ako Aotearoa and the AQA, promote the importance of student voice in the tertiary sector. Annex Three provides more information about these agencies and their work on student voice.

Organisational level

There are varying arrangements for student voice across different subsectors. Most universities have student representation spanning the class, programme, faculty, committee, board, and TEI council levels. Student representation in ITPs and Wānanga, however, is not as comprehensive and consistent as that in universities. We know less about student representation in Private Training Establishments (PTEs), which may be due, in part, to the nature of PTEs relationship with government, as compared to TEIs.

Most TEIs also have student-led unions or councils. There are active student unions at all eight universities, one of the three wānanga (Te Wānanga o Raukawa), and six of 16 ITPs. Of the 10 ITPs that do not have unions, six have alternative avenues for student voice, including student councils, student advisory groups, student hubs, and student voice coordinators.

Minority learner groups, however, are not fully represented on TEI student executive groups. For example, representatives for Māori students or Pacific students are currently only in six of eight and three of eight universities, respectively. Also, only one university has a representative for disabled students. However, the majority of TEIs do have support services for Māori, Pacific, and disabled students.

Following the Education Amendment Act 2018, all university and ITP councils are required to have at least one elected student member. Although this does not apply to wānanga, some wānanga have governance arrangements to ensure that students are represented on the council. For example, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa’s council (Te Mana Whakahare) ensures that at least one council member is a current or former student.

There are also additional avenues for student voice that do not involve student representation. For instance, these include feedback mechanisms for students to review classes, courses, and services on offer to them (e.g. via surveys and evaluations) and procedures and arrangements for students to lodge official complaints. This paper will not cover these particular avenues, however it should be noted that other officials are progressing this broader student voice work.

Student voice in overseas jurisdictions

The United Kingdom and Australia have strong and sustainable national level structures in place (or in development) to support student voice across their tertiary sectors. Some of these include, the National Student Engagement Programme (NS\textsuperscript{3}EP) in Ireland, the ‘Student Voice Australia’ project, and Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs).

Each of these models supports effective student voice by working towards having students centrally involved in decision-making and able to engage as partners at all levels of tertiary education quality assurance and enhancement activities. Additionally,

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{3} A government-funded organisation that provides services to improve delivery of high quality teaching in the tertiary education sector.
\end{footnote}
each model has well-connected and -supported infrastructures, with partnerships in place between various sector agencies and national students’ associations⁴.

22 Of the three models, sparqs is considered the international best practice for student voice. Sparqs provides training and resources for student representatives and students’ associations to develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their roles⁵. Sparqs help students to engage with providers and in national policy discussions, and they also support institutions to have effective mechanisms in place to facilitate student engagement. Annex Four provides more detail about sparqs and the other international student voice models.

We could further strengthen student voice in New Zealand’s tertiary education system

23 New Zealand could do more to enhance student voice at both a national and organisational level.

24 At the national level, we should strive for a more inclusive and comprehensive student voice. All current national level students’ associations are limited by their incomplete membership (see Annex Two). Comprehensive membership in these associations would help ensure that the unique perspectives of each TEOs student body could be communicated nationally and contribute to governance and policy decisions.

25 We have provided you with options that will lead to more consistent and sustainable student voice in the tertiary sector, including a national agency for guidance and support around student voice. Unlike overseas jurisdictions – including Scotland, Australia, and Ireland – New Zealand does not currently have a national-level agency with a committed purpose for supporting and facilitating best practice around student voice in the tertiary sector.

26 A key issue for student voice is financial sustainability. With the implementation of VSM, student unions’ no longer receive compulsory membership fees as part of their income stream, which has made student voice weaker and less sustainable at both the national and organisational level. Moreover, the Government does not provide direct funding to national students’ associations to support their role in representing students. Student associations must find their own sources of funding.

27 NZUSA, for example, receives funding from its member unions’ subscription fees. Following VSM, however, student unions no longer receive compulsory membership fees, which was a significant portion of their income. The reduction of their income has led to fewer and weaker local student unions, which, consequently, has weakened the national collective student voice.

28 At the organisational level, student voice would benefit from greater consistency within and across TEOs. For example, student voice structures and practices are currently stronger in universities as compared to the rest of the tertiary sector. As such, a national agency for student voice could support greater consistency across the sector.

29 As at the national level, we should also aim for a student voice that is more inclusive and comprehensive within organisations. Currently, there is incomplete representation of minority learners on student executive groups, with only some TEIs having dedicated roles for representing Māori, Pacific, and disabled students.

⁴ For instance, NSIEP was collaboratively launched by the Higher Education Authority, Quality and Qualifications Ireland, and the Union of Students in Ireland.

⁵ In the New Zealand schooling sector, the School Trustees Association (STA) performs a similar role for School Boards of Trustees.
30 Student voice in the ITP sector could be stronger. The RoVE presents a key opportunity to establish strong and sustainable structures for student voice in the proposed NZIST. Student representation at the regional and national level will be necessary to help ensure that student voice can be effectively channelled up to the NZIST’s national council. We will continue to work on this as the RoVE progresses.

There are a range of options for enhancing student voice

31 We have identified four broad options for enhancing student voice in the tertiary education sector. Of note, a combination of the options is possible. The options are:

Option 1 - Enhancing the Status Quo

32 We could build on the changes that have already been implemented in the tertiary sector to strengthen student voice in the following ways:

Exploring changes to financial arrangements to help student unions increase their income stream

33 We could explore changes to, or opportunities within, the current compulsory student services fee (CSSF) arrangements. Within the current arrangements, TEIs are required to consult annually with their students on the CSSF (including how much is spent on what services). Although some TEIs have established formal partnerships with their student unions to deliver student services funded by CSSF, this is not the case at all TEIs. As such, future work could initially focus on how to facilitate and support strong partnerships between student unions and TEIs to further improve the consultation process around CSSF.

Expanding an existing agency’s capabilities and capacity to provide coherent, consistent, and effective support on student voice in TEOs

34 This type of support could involve the development, distribution, and implementation of guidelines regarding best practice for student voice. Conducting regular audits at all TEOs to evaluate and provide recommendations for improving student voice

35 These audits would help ensure that TEOs are held accountable for encouraging and supporting student voice within their institution. These could be modelled on the AQA audits, which provide recommendations to enhance student voice and engagement in quality assurance at universities.

36 It should be noted that the three ways to enhance the status quo are not mutually exclusive – all (or some) of them could be implemented in parallel.

Option 2 - Structural changes to enhance student voice

37 Currently, in most TEOs, student voice is channelled into the institutes governing council via one elected student member who speaks on behalf of the student body.
Structural change could be made to better support the student representatives on TEO councils and to help hold the councils more accountable on student issues.

We could explore structural changes to strengthen student voice in institutions. For instance, this could involve requiring TEOs to establish student advisory committees that report directly to their governing council via the elected student council member. This requirement could be implemented as a condition of funding for TEIs, and also potentially for PTEs as a condition of their registration. These committees would ideally include a diverse group of student members (both provider-appointed and student-elected) to provide unique perspectives on, and critical analysis of, student issues.

This option may require legislative change. Consideration would need to be given to the functions and requirements of the committees, including how the committees are established, how members are appointed, and how they can and should operate. Ultimately, however, the effectiveness of such a committee would depend on the extent to which providers integrate the committee into its management and decision-making processes.

Option 3 - Establishing a national centre for student voice

Developing a national centre for student voice, which would have a specific role in supporting student voice and engagement within and across TEOs nationwide. The idea of establishing such a centre was initially put forward by NZUSA – they suggested the Government establish and fund an agency for supporting student voice in the tertiary sector, as modelled on Scotland’s spars.

A national centre for student voice would help New Zealand’s tertiary education system move towards consistently good practice sector-wide and enhance the ability of students to contribute meaningfully and usefully to existing decision-making processes. Also, establishing a national centre would help New Zealand line up with international best practice in other jurisdictions (as detailed in Annex Four).

The development, establishment, and continued operations of a national centre for student voice would require funding both up-front and on a continued basis. It could be government-funded, student-funded, or a combination of both.

Option 4 - Repealing VSM

Consideration could be made to repeal VSM. In the June 2018 meeting you had with NZUSA, they did raise the possibility of pursuing legislative change with you regarding VSM repeal. You indicated that you would not support this directly, but noted that it could be progressed as a private members bill (METIS 1170133 refers).

NZUSA support changes to VSM as a way of increasing student union’s income stream, membership numbers, and regaining their operational autonomy from TEOs. Additionally, more sustainable and better financed student voice at the organisational level would have positive flow-on effects for student voice at the national level.

Also, repeal of VSM may not be as sustainable over the longer term, as the other options, as it is heavily dependent on continuing levels of government support. As such, we would recommend undertaking further work on the other options, ahead of this option.
Next Steps

If you agree to undertake further work on any of the options identified above we will:

- undertake further analysis on the identified options, including potential cost, administrative and legislative implications
- work on consulting with relevant agencies regarding your preferred approach/es to enhancing student voice
- aim to report back to you later in the year.

Proactive Release

We recommend that this Education Report be proactively released once related policy decisions on the RoVE have been made publicly available. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provision of the Official Information Act 1982.
Annex 1: Key interdependent work programmes

Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE)

There are opportunities to work on how student voice is represented and governed within the proposed New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology as part of the RoVE. We will work to ensure that effective avenues and governance structures for student voice are outlined and progressed early in the reform process. For instance, this involves ensuring that student voice is encompassed within the legislative charter, which will set out the operating and guiding principles of the new institute.

Tertiary Education Strategy (TES)

To give full effect to the Governments’ drive towards a learner-centric education system, students will need to be involved throughout the development of the TES and its relevant action plans. Involving students will help ensure that their perspectives and recommendations can shape the TES. Specifically, it will be key to hear from students regarding what is and is not working for them in the tertiary system, and get specific feedback on the proposed priorities of the upcoming TES.

Māori Education Plan – Ka Hikitia

Any work on student voice needs to consider how the voice of students from minority groups is communicated. The Māori Education Plan (Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2017) incorporates the value of strong student engagement and voice for Māori, which ties into its vision of seeing Māori students enjoying and achieving education success as Māori. One of the key elements for realising this vision is the strong engagement and contribution from Māori students and those who support them (e.g., whānau).

The Government’s plan for Pacific Education

The Government’s plan for Pacific Education will incorporate the findings from the Pacific fono on the national Education Conversation | Kōrero Mātauranga, and continue to recognise, build and value Pacific diversity in student’s identities, languages and cultures (student voice) and connections with their families and communities to achieve better educational outcomes.
Annex 2: National Students’ Associations

New Zealand Union of Students’ Associations (NZUSA)

NZUSA has seven full-time member unions and three associate member unions (see table below). The president from each local students’ union is a member of the NZUSA National Executive.

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<tr>
<th>Full-time</th>
<th>Association of Students at UCOL</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Auckland University Students’ Association</td>
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<td>Lincoln University Students’ Association</td>
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<td>Massey University Students’ Association</td>
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<td>Otago University Students’ Association</td>
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<td>Victoria University of Wellington Students’ Association</td>
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<td>Unitec Student Council</td>
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<td>Associate</td>
<td>Albany Students’ Association, Massey University</td>
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<td>Student Association at Wintec, Waikato Institute of Technology</td>
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<td>Younited Students’ Association, Eastern Institute of Technology</td>
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NZUSA runs annual Student Voice in University summits (from 2016 onwards) focused on promoting student voice in universities and supporting capacity and capability building of student representatives. NZUSA has also worked in conjunction with Ako Aotearoa and the Academic and Quality Agency to enhance student engagement in quality assurance procedures at TEOs.

NZUSA also promote the importance of student welfare and pastoral care. In 2018, NZUSA released the report, ‘Kei te pai?’, which highlighted the increasing demand for university counselling services in New Zealand. NZUSA also called for action on the Government’s commitment to free counselling for under-25s, referenced in the Labour-Greens Confidence and Supply Agreement.

Te Mana Ākonga (TMĀ)

TMĀ provides representation for all Māori Student Roopū (groups) at universities. TMĀ advocate for better conditions for Māori Students on campus and are responsible for representing issues pertaining to Māori students. All eight universities and three of the 16 ITPs are members of TMĀ (see table below). TMĀ’s decision making body is made up of two representatives from each member Roopū.

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<th>Mātātupu - Unitec, Auckland</th>
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<td>Titahi Ki Tua - Auckland University of Technology</td>
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<td>Ngā Taurira Māori - University of Auckland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Te Waka o Ngā Ākonga Māori - Massey University, Albany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Te Waiora o Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato - University of Waikato</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manawatū - Massey University, Palmerston North</td>
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<td>Te Tira Ākonga - Eastern Institute of Technology</td>
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<td>Ngāi Taurira - Victoria University of Wellington</td>
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<td>Kōkiri Ngātahi - Massey University, Wellington</td>
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<td>Te Akatoki - University of Canterbury</td>
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<td>Te Awhioraki - Lincoln University</td>
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<td>Ara - Institute of Canterbury</td>
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<tr>
<td>Te Roopū Māori - University of Otago</td>
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</table>
TMÅ and NZUSA have a close partnership and collaborate in various areas. For instance, TMÅ has joined the organising group for the 2019 Student Voice in Universities Summit, which has previously been organised by NZUSA and the AQA.

New Zealand International Students' Association (NZISA)

NZISA aims to be the representative body, collective voice, and advocate of all international students in New Zealand. Currently NZISA has members from seven of the eight universities (see table below).

| Auckland University Students' Association |
| Lincoln University Students' Association |
| Waikato University Students' Association |
| Otago University Students' Association |
| Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association |
| The University of Canterbury Students' Association |
| Auckland University of Technology Students' Association |

NZISA and NZUSA are currently drafting a Memorandum of Understanding to formalise their partnership.

New Zealand Tongan Tertiary Students' Association (NZTTS)

NZTTS provides a platform that brings together Tongan tertiary students from around New Zealand, to encourage and nurture a balance between cultural identity and academic studies. NZTTS have members from the university and ITP sector (see table below).

| Auckland Institute of Studies |
| Auckland University of Technology |
| MIT, Manukau Institute of Technology |
| University of Auckland |
| University of Otago |
| University of Waikato |
| Wintec, Waikato Institute of Technology |
| Victoria University of Wellington |
Annex 3: Ako Aotearoa and the AQA

Ako Aotearoa and the AQA's work on student voice

Both agencies have worked in collaboration with NZUSA. For instance, in 2012 Ako Aotearoa and NZUSA conducted research about student representative systems in TEOs and how these systems contribute to quality enhancement procedures.

More recently, Ako Aotearoa led the 2017 Higher Education Pacific Quality Benchmarking Project, which included an evaluation of student voice at four TEOs. The project outlined areas of good practice (i.e., student voice is embedded in regulations and policies) and areas for improvement (i.e., strengthening voice for Māori and Pacific students).

The AQA's immediate drivers for enhancing student voice are the decision to include students, or recent graduates, as members of its university Academic Audit panels. To help achieve this, the AQA developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NZUSA towards a common work plan, including establishing a pool of student auditors.

The upcoming Cycle 6 audit framework has a guideline statement about student voice - "improved outcomes for students are enabled through engaging with the student voice in quality assurance processes at all levels, and this is communicated to students." During the audits, universities will be expected to provide evidence that this guideline is met.
Annex 4: Student voice in overseas jurisdictions

Scotland, Ireland, and Australia have national-level organisations/initiatives that play a fundamental role in coordinating approaches to enhancing student voice and ensuring that it is sustainable. These include:

**Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs):**

A national development service for students founded in 2003 to support student engagement. They have a mission to "ensure that students are able to engage as partners at all levels of tertiary education quality assurance and enhancement activities" and provide training and resources for student representatives and associations to develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their roles. They also support institutions to have effective mechanisms in place to facilitate student engagement, and provide links to support students to engage with providers and in national policy discussions.

Sparqs is funded through the Scottish Funding Council and is involved with various sector agencies and projects. For instance, they are involved in the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland's 'Enhancement Themes', the Enhancement-led Institutional Review of higher education in Scotland, and are partners with QAA Scotland.

**Ireland's National Student Engagement Programme (NSSEP):**

An initiative that strives to have students centrally involved in decision-making processes within Ireland's higher education institutions. Sparqs were engaged as consultants during the development of NSSEP, and was collaboratively launched in 2016 by the Higher Education Authority, Quality and Qualifications Ireland and the Union of Students in Ireland. Two key work strands of NSSEP include developing a National Student Training Programme and the Development of Institutional Capacity for student voice and engagement.

**'Student Voice Australia' project:**

The output of 3-4 years of government funded-research on student voice in Australia's tertiary education sector, led by Sally Varnham. In 2016, she was awarded a National Teaching Fellowship entitled, 'Creating a National Framework for Student Partnership in University Decision-Making and Governance'. In 2017, she undertook a sector-wide collaboration to consider the "what, why, and how" of student partnership in and across Australian institutions. This led to the development of STEPUP (Students and Tertiary Education Providers Undertaking Partnership) for quality enhancement.

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standard Agency (TEQSA) has taken steps to enhance student voice by partnering and signing MoUs with four of Australia's leading student representative bodies, including: National Union of Students; Council of Postgraduate Students Association; Council of International Students Australia; and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Postgraduate Association.