

Findings report 30 June 2021

UNZ Findings from Universities' 2020 Self-reviews of Performance against the Interim Domestic Code

New Zealand Universities were required to submit an inaugural annual self-review of their performance under the Interim Domestic Code (IDC)¹ to Universities New Zealand (UNZ) for evaluation. In early 2021, UNZ undertook an evaluation of all eight universities' 2020 self-reviews to determine (a) Universities' adherence to the Interim Domestic Code (IDC)², (b) to identify the ways in which Universities' foster good practice and continuous improvement, (c) to identify areas for improvement in the self-reviews, and (d) to make recommendations which supported a more coherent and effective future self-review process.

On 17 February 2021, the findings of each university's self-review evaluation were summarised in a primary report submitted to the Committee on University Student Pastoral Care (or CUSPaC), a sub-committee of UNZ with delegated responsibility for monitoring compliance with the Interim Domestic Code. In addition to this report, two supplementary thematic reports further evaluated each university's self-review of compliance with IDC Outcome 6: *Student Voice*, and IDC Outcomes 7 to 10: *Student Accommodation*. The findings documented in these reports were presented to CUSPaC by the UNZ self-review evaluation lead, Dr Sharon Forbes, on April 21.

It was confirmed by Dr Forbes that, overall, the self-review evaluation process had identified:

1. All universities successfully demonstrated adherence to the IDC through the provision of strategy, policy and process documentation evidencing their pastoral care support systems.
2. All universities provided exemplars of good practice and identified strategies and processes supporting continuous improvement in pastoral care delivery relating to some – but not all – of the 10 outcomes articulated in the IDC. These exemplars highlighted the significant investment in, and professional commitment to the provision of pastoral care for students that is embedded within New Zealand universities.
3. All universities had practices and processes in place relating to the incorporation of student voices in the development, implementation and operationalising of pastoral care provision. These were comprehensively examined in the student supplementary voice self-review evaluation, which identified that the most common practices and processes mentioned in relation to Outcome 6 were student representation on faculty, school, hall, student service, programme, and class committees and/or boards, student representation on programme or service review panels, a broad range of survey instruments capturing student feedback on all academic and service delivery experiences, and comprehensive promotion of communication channels for students to provide feedback or elevate concerns and formal complaints.
4. The supplementary review of student accommodation also identified that all universities had an extensive and well-developed range of policies, practices and processes evidencing compliance with IDC outcomes 7 to 10. Exemplars of good practice which evidenced both compliance and a high standard of accommodation service provision included appropriate accommodation options supporting specific age, gender, culture or health and wellbeing requirements of residents, comprehensive training initiatives for student-facing

¹ The Codes refers to the Education (Pastoral Care of Domestic Tertiary Students) Interim Code of Practice 2019 (the Interim Domestic Code (IDC)) and the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016.

accommodation staff, notably Residential Assistants (or RAs), robust risk mitigation and risk management processes, significant investment in social activities and educational resources supporting the health and wellbeing and academic success of residents, and a strategic commitment to maintaining diverse and inclusive residential communities. (See appendix A. for quantitative information on student accommodation at New Zealand universities).

5. There was significant variation in the scope, depth, and coherence when comparing the standard of each University's self-review submission. The overall standard of IDC self-reviews was also noted as being "less strong" when compared to the self-reviews of pastoral care for international students. However, this variation was anticipated, given that universities were navigating a new self-review process in the wake of an unprecedented global event intersecting all aspects of service delivery.
6. A key area requiring significant improvement in all self-reviews was the need for universities to include relevant evidence demonstrating they were achieving the outcomes expected of the IDC. While there was good evidence of pastoral care systems being in place as outlined in 1. above, an overall lack of evidence communicating the effectiveness of those pastoral care systems meant that "how well" and "how do we know" questions were not answered in some of the self-review documents.

Action points

1. Actions carried forward from CUSPaC's meeting on 21 April 2021 in response to the self-review evaluation findings were:
 - a. To improve the quality and coherency of the self-reviews, and to set expectations regarding the evidence base used to demonstrate code compliance as well as the overall effectiveness of pastoral care systems, UNZ is developing a universal self-review template. This work will be completed following the finalisation of the new Code of Pastoral Care and reflect its requirements as much as practically possible. It is noted that supporting universities to engage in, and improve, the self-review process is likely to be supported by recent draft code revisions – notably outcome 1, process 2, point ii (b), that providers must review their learner wellbeing and safety practices using relevant quantitative and qualitative data.
 - b. It is intended that the new template and underpinning self-review process for 2021 onwards will include provision for sign-off from each university's student representative body, thus improving student engagement with the self-review process at an institutional level.
 - c. All universities will report to UNZ on code compliance improvements since the completion of the self-review evaluation process, noting any gaps in compliance, and will provide a quality improvement plan. UNZ will submit these reports to CUSPaC for review and discussion at a future CUSPaC meeting.
 - d. UNZ is adding a requirement in CUSPaC's Terms of Reference to make it clear that a responsibility of CUSPaC is to provide advice and comment on issues relating to the wellbeing and safety of learners to institutions and agencies. This will be drafted and submitted to CUSPaC in preparation for CUSPaC's 27 July 2021 meeting.
2. A new CUSPaC Chair, Professor Sonia Mazey from University of Canterbury was appointed in May 2021. Professor Mazey met with UNZ staff to become familiar with UNZ's portfolio of functions, and to establish a new self-review timeline for 2021 in preparation for the finalising of the new Code of Pastoral Care.
3. The CUSPaC Chair and CUSPaC Portfolio Manager have initiated regular meetings with CUSPaC's student representatives to help support their participation in CUSPaC. It is

intended that these meetings help facilitate the incorporation of student voices in CUSPaC-led projects which improve pastoral care outcomes.

4. CUSPaC will re-convene on 28 July 2021. It is intended that the committee will focus on preparation for the finalising of the new Pastoral Care Code, the development of a universal self-review template, calendar the new 2021 self-review timeline, and further embedding expectations regarding the 2021 self-review cycle.
5. The final CUSPaC meeting for 2021 is scheduled for November.

University Accommodation, February 2021

Profile of the university student body

Around 180,000 students are currently enrolled at New Zealand's eight universities. About 15% are international students and the remaining 85% are domestic students.

44% of the domestic students (around 67,000) have travelled away from their home town, city or locality to study at university. In addition, a significant proportion of the other 56% of students will choose to leave home and live in flats or halls of residence at some point during their studies.

Just 0.2% of students enrolled at university are under 18 years of age. The other 99.8% are legally adults with expectations of privacy and independence. For a large proportion of these students, university will be the first time they live away from home, and so the first time they experience the many freedoms that go with this.

When students live away from home, they are not homogenous in their choices about where they live. Factors such as budget, lifestyle, and the choices of their peers and families are all important.

University accommodation

Each university is established under the Education Act 1989 as an autonomous institution and each is also a Crown Entity under the Crown Entities Act 2004.

Universities' primary obligation is teaching and research – they have no legal obligation to provide accommodation. Where they do, it is for a range of reasons that vary from university to university.

The most common reasons are one or more of the following:

1. addressing expectations of students and their parents, where students or their parents are looking for managed accommodation to help provide a supportive living environment while studying. This may be through providing services such as catering, housekeeping, laundry facilities, utilities and on-site pastoral care and support.
2. simplifying the process of securing accommodation for students coming from overseas, who may not be familiar with rental contracts, set up of utilities or who may otherwise struggle to make these arrangements before arriving from overseas
3. providing a safe environment for students to make friends and build networks before deciding on living arrangements in the private market in future years
4. addressing gaps in the local accommodation market, if the university thinks local private accommodation options are insufficient and some other option needs to be provided or arranged
5. recruiting students. Attractive on-campus accommodation is a factor for some students in where they decide to study. Providing such accommodation can help with recruiting students.
6. improved ability to retain students. Students in university accommodation tend to be more engaged and less likely to discontinue their studies for non-academic reasons. This is particularly the case for Māori and Pasifika students.

7. historic factors. Various trusts (religious and educational) set up halls of residence as early as the 19th Century to support students in a range of charitable ways.

Because of factors such as these and the relative priority individual universities place on the need to provide accommodation, there is significant variation in numbers of beds per student and types of accommodation across the eight universities.

This variation extends not only to the type of physical environment (e.g. accommodation blocks versus apartments, modern versus old), but also to the services provided (e.g. fully catered or not), size (of the hall), and ethos. This variety is important, as it gives students choice in the type of accommodation and associated student accommodation communities they become part of.

The core function of universities is teaching and research. Universities know they need to facilitate the provision of accommodation, but they do not actually need to own or operate that accommodation. Where universities do own and operate accommodation, it is usually on a break-even (not-for-profit) basis.

As such, universities rely on private trusts and commercial entities to provide a significant proportion of the beds in student accommodation. More information is on this below.

At present (February 2021) there are 80 'halls of residence' with 19,302 beds across New Zealand's eight universities.

Table 1 (Profile of university accommodation nationally) shows the number of halls and beds within them by university. It can be seen that universities provide an average of 1 bed per 10 students, but this varies significantly by university.

Auckland University of Technology has beds for just 5% of its students, compared to the physically adjacent University of Auckland with 10%. Victoria University of Wellington at 14% and Lincoln University at 17% and the University of Otago at 19% are at the upper end of beds per student roll.

Table 1: Profile of University Accommodation Nationally

University	Halls	Beds	Student Roll	Beds as % of all Students
Auckland	14	4,457	43,148	10%
AUT	3	1,406	29,428	5%
Waikato	5	1,070	13,232	8%
Massey	10	1,911	30,491	6%
VUW	13	3,158	22,406	14%
Canterbury	10	2,641	18,364	14%
Lincoln	10	574	3,305	17%
Otago	15	4,085	21,108	19%
Total/Avg	80	19,302	181,482	11%

Of the 80 halls of residence, 44% are for first-year students only and the rest are for mixed (first-year and later) or mature (post-first-year only, and sometimes exclusively postgraduate) students. This is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Different Halls for Different Students

Halls	Beds	Type of Student	% of beds
29	8,549	First Year Only	44%
34	9,031	Mixed	47%
17	1,722	Mature (post 1st year) only	9%
80	19302	Totals	100%

Halls vary in the range of amenities and services they provide to residents as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Amenities and services across the halls of residence.

Type of accommodation across the 80 halls	Halls where 'yes'	% of all halls where 'yes'
Academic tutoring support provided?	54	68%
Catering available?	50	62%
Student Rooms share kitchen facilities?	36	37%
Student Rooms share bathrooms/showers?	70	91%
Student Rooms are cleaned for occupants?	34	44%

A proportion of halls also have particular characteristics that affect who can stay in them and/or the expectations of their residents. For example:

- Some halls require their residents to do communal work, or to buddy up with at least one other student for study purposes.
- Some halls are either entirely, or in parts, alcohol free.
- One hall is for couples and small families only.
- Some halls have larger apartment-style rooms for couples.
- Some halls have specified areas for same-gender and/or LGBTQI students.

As outlined earlier, universities typically maintain a breakeven objective around the provision of accommodation. Though costs are higher than a student would pay for a room in a standard student flat, the fees includes a much wider range of services (per Table 3) and things like internet access, electricity, recreation centre memberships, etc.

Demand for rooms generally exceeds supply and all universities budget on close to 100% occupancy when setting breakeven budgets. If a student leaves accommodation during the year, the university is generally not able to bring in a replacement.

Rents are never increased during an academic year.

Who owns halls of residence and who makes decisions on things like contracts and fee rebates?

Universities do not own or operate all the halls of residence on and around their campuses. This is seen in Table 4: Who owns 'university' halls and beds?

Table 4: Who owns 'university' halls & beds?

Halls	Beds	Who owns the halls/beds?	% of beds
50	10,931	University	57%
18	5,919	Commercial	31%
8	1,544	Trust	8%
4	908	Someone else (eg unit owner)	5%
80	19302	Totals	100%

And universities themselves are not the final decision-maker across some accommodation types. For around 44% of beds, it is up to the charitable trust or commercial owner/operator to decide on what is in the contract students sign and to decide on things like rebates and fees refunds. This is seen in [tables 5 & 6](#) below.

Table 5: Who has final say on what is in accommodation contracts?

Halls	University	Commercial	Trust	Other	Totals
University	50	0	0	0	50
Commercial	4	14	0	0	18
Trust	0	0	8	0	8
Other	4	0	0	0	4
Totals	58	14	8	0	80
Beds					
University	10,931	0	0	0	10,931
Commercial	1,678	4,241	0	0	5,919
Trust	0	0	1,544	0	1,544
Other	908	0	0	0	908
Totals	13,517	4,241	1,544	0	19,302

Table 6: Who has final say on rebates/fee refunds?

Halls	University	Commercial	Trust	Other	Totals
University	50	0	0	0	50
Commercial	6	9	0	3	18
Trust	0	0	8	0	8
Other	4	0	0	0	4
Totals	60	9	8	3	80
Beds					
University	10,931	0	0	0	10,931
Commercial	1,830	2,683	0	1,406	5,919
Trust	0	0	1,544	0	1,544
Other	908	0	0	0	908
Totals	13,669	2,683	1,544	1,406	19,302

[Table 7](#) shows the proportion of each university's beds that are university-owned and operated.

Table 7: Profile of university accommodation nationally

University	Halls	Beds	Uni Owned & Operated	% of beds university owned & operated
Auckland	14	4,457	2,307	52%
AUT*	2	709	0	0%
Waikato	5	1,090	1,052	97%
Massey	9	1,730	1,230	71%
VUW	14	3,531	2,339	66%
Canterbury	10	2,641	484	18%
Lincoln	9	564	564	100%
Otago	15	3,497	2,549	73%
Total/Avg	78	18,219	10,525	58%

Table 8 looks at the 30 halls run by private trusts and commercial providers and shows the approximate age of the contract between the trust/provider and the university. Most arrangements with private charitable trusts are more than 50 years old.

Most commercial providers' contracts were established in the 2000s and 2010s when large numbers of university accommodation were built to deal with the combined issues of growing student numbers and the increasing expense and difficult access of off-campus accommodation. In most instances, this accommodation was purpose built by the commercial provider.

Table 8: When were contracts established for halls run by trusts & commercial providers?

Contract Established	Private Trusts		Commercial Providers	
	Halls	Beds	Halls	Beds
50+ years ago	7	1,284	1	115
1970s	1	260	1	197
1980s	0	0	1	188
1990s	0	0	0	0
2000s	0	0	9	3,152
2010s	0	0	9	2,478
2020s	0	0	1	697
Totals	8	1,544	22	6,827

Most private trusts operate on the basis that they reinvest any surpluses back into improving accommodation and other amenities available to residents.

When commercial providers own and operate accommodation on university land, that provider expects and usually achieves a commercial rate of return on their investment, but universities generally continue to just cover costs.

Regardless of whether a hall of residence is owned and operated by a university, a trust or a commercial operator, all are subject to the requirements of Section 5b of the Residential Tenancies Act.