

Consideration of Future Faculty Arrangements for Law and Business and Economics Review Committee

Recommendation Report

20 February 2025

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1. Introduction and procedures

On 12 November 2024 the Vice-Chancellor published the [‘Consideration of Future Faculty Arrangements’ Proposal Document](#) seeking feedback on the following:

- That the Faculty of Law become part of the Faculty of Business and Economics and the combined faculty then undertake a process to consider its name.
- That the brand names and identities “University of Auckland Business School” and “Auckland Law School” be retained alongside the name of the combined faculty.
- That two law departments be created within the Auckland Law School:
 - One focused on private law and related areas like commercial, corporate, intellectual property, and technology law. Members of the current Department of Commercial Law in the Business School would become members of the private and commercial law department in the Law School.
 - The other focused on public law, including criminal, environmental, indigenous, and international law.
 - Each department would have a head of department, with one head of department being the Dean of the Law School, who would report to the dean of the combined faculty, and one head of department being the Deputy Dean of the Law School.
- That transition leadership be established to ensure the changes are effectively managed and to minimise any impacts to teaching and research. An Acting Dean of Law would manage the transition before the heads of department (including the Dean/Deputy Dean of the Auckland Law School) are appointed. The current Dean of Business and Economics would be the dean of the combined faculty.

A total of 793 submissions were received in response to these proposals. Submissions were read by a support team and key themes were identified.

The submissions and a summary report were provided to the Future Faculty Arrangements Review Committee in advance of the Committee meeting. The summary report identified the themes and sub-themes, the number of submissions associated with each of these, and the specific submission number(s).

The Review Committee met on Wednesday 5 February to consider feedback from submissions on the ‘Consideration of the future organisation of the faculties of Law, Business and Economics’.

The responsibilities of the Review Committee, as outlined in their terms of reference, were to consider feedback from submissions and make recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor (VC). The review committee comprised:

Professor John Hosking (Chair)	Retired-Dean, Science
Professor Susan Watson	Dean, Business and Economics
Professor Jaime King	Acting-Dean, Law
Adrienne Cleland	Deputy Vice Chancellor Operations & Registrar
Andrew Phipps	Director, Human Resources
Professor Te Kawehau Hoskins	Pro Vice-Chancellor Māori
Professor Jemaima Tiatia-Siau	Pro Vice-Chancellor Pacific
Vandana Minhas-Tineja	Director of Faculty of Operations, Science
Associate Professor Jenny Malmstrom	Faculty of Engineering
Professor Rick Bigwood	Dean of Law, University of Queensland
Professor Shelley Griffiths	Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Otago and member of New Zealand Council of Legal Education
Paul Nickels	Partner, PwC
Gabriel Boyd	President, Auckland University Students' Association (AUSA)
Matthew Lee	Undergraduate Education Vice-President, AUSA
Aurora Chen	Co-President, Auckland University Commerce Students' Association
Apurva Anand	President, Auckland University Law Students' Society

Possible conflicts of interest of committee members were noted. The Committee acknowledged that four members were directly involved in submissions made as part of this review process. The Chair emphasised the importance of keeping an open mind and ensuring that all discussions remain objective, and all agreed

they were able to do so. Additionally, the Committee acknowledged the significant overlap in submission themes and confirmed that it was appropriate to comment on overarching issues that were prevalent in the wider submissions.

The Review Committee discussed the submissions and the associated themes at its meeting. The Committee was impressed with the number and overall quality of the submissions. The considered responses provided a richness of detail.

Based on their deliberations, the Committee developed this Recommendations Report with a set of recommendations for the Vice-Chancellor for consideration.

The report was reviewed by committee members prior to its submission to the Vice-Chancellor.

This report provides a balanced summary of submissions and committee discussions, ensuring that key concerns are acknowledged while presenting structured recommendations for the Vice-Chancellor's consideration.

2. Recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor

Following a review of submissions and feedback themes, the Committee makes the following recommendations:

1. Autonomy, identity and governance structures

Should new faculty arrangements proceed, the Commitment recommends:

- a) emphasising the retention of the identity of the Auckland Law School within the final faculty re-arrangement noting that this is not an unusual organisational structure amongst peer institutions internationally.
- b) emphasising the retention of the identity of the Auckland Business School as part of any final faculty re-arrangements
- c) establishing a working group, led by the Faculty Executive Dean, working with a new or acting Dean of the Business School, the acting Dean of the Law School and others as appropriate, to propose fit-for-purpose governance structures and academic leadership roles at the schools level that will support both schools to maintain appropriate independence and fulfil any external accreditation requirements. The group should also clearly outline how faculty leadership roles will contribute to leadership across the span of faculty disciplines, address the University's commitment to Māori and how Law academic staff will be appropriately incorporated into faculty leadership roles.
- d) ensuring governance structures recognise the importance of disciplinary expertise in staffing decisions. While some decisions may be made at the faculty level, disciplinary input should be given

appropriate deference to maintain academic integrity and subject-matter leadership.

- e) ensuring distinct student experiences remain, including for graduation and student societies, while also exploring ways to enhance student opportunities within the new faculty structure. Establish a student discussion group to gather input on what should remain distinct and where collaboration could add value.

2. Reputation

Should new faculty arrangements proceed, the Committee recommends:

- a) development of a clear communication strategy to address concerns from external stakeholders, including the legal profession, prospective students, and the wider community. Reinforce how the Law School will maintain its independence, and core academic mission, ensuring its distinct role and ethical responsibilities.
- b) reinforcing that Law students and Business students retain a strong sense of identity, including distinct branding, student societies, and graduation experiences. Consider forming a student advisory group to guide how autonomy and collaboration are balanced within the new structure.

3. Qualifications and curriculum

Should new faculty arrangements proceed, the Committee recommends:

- a) structuring the new faculty to maintain independence for the Law School and the Business School with respect to their curricula and qualifications.
- b) establishing a separate Board of Studies for Law to ensure academic oversight, and a comprehensive and balanced legal education.

4. Rationale for change

- a) Develop an engagement plan that clearly articulates more deeply the benefits, tailored accordingly by stakeholder group.
- b) Strengthen messaging around collaboration opportunities and how aligning within a larger entity enhances the ability to leverage these opportunities effectively.
- c) Address student concerns directly by emphasising academic and career benefits.

5. Cost savings

- a) Clearly communicate the University's financial position in broader messaging, emphasising that the proposal is primarily driven by strategic and operational considerations rather than cost-cutting. However, acknowledge that cost reductions, including professional staffing costs, will be necessary regardless of whether the proposal proceeds or not.

- b) If the proposal proceeds, design future faculty structures that recognise and acknowledge the value of specialised professional services and student support for each school.

6. Public and private departmental split

Should new faculty arrangements proceed, the Committee recommends:

- a) that the Law School's departmental structure not be split as outlined in the proposal document.
- b) that a working group should be established to explore structural options that reduce administrative burdens on school and faculty leadership while strengthening beneficial partnerships with Commercial Law.
- c) the working group (recommendation 6b) should assess whether moving Commercial Law to the Law School would provide better alignment and academic support, keeping in mind disciplinary differences in teaching approaches.

7. Consultation process and timelines

Should new faculty arrangements proceed, the Committee recommends considering extending the timeline for implementation to enable the mitigation of risks.

8. Engagement with Māori staff and students

Should new faculty arrangements proceed, the Committee recommends that the implementation approach include a structured engagement process with Māori staff and students, ensuring their perspectives are well considered.

9. Professional staff, student support services and student experience

Should a new faculty arrangements proceed, the Committee recommends the:

- a) development of a solid transition plan to ensure continuity of student support services, minimising disruption and safeguarding the student experience. This should include support for Māori and Pacific students and access to broader pastoral care.
- b) that future student support structures should be informed by submission feedback (shared, with permission, with a detailed organisational design team), and appropriately reflect the distinct

needs of Law and Business students, including provision of career services.

3. Context and committee discussions that led to recommendations

Addressing misinformation

At the outset the committee acknowledged that many submissions reflected misunderstandings about the proposed changes.

- A common concern was that students would graduate with different, possibly combined, qualifications. The Committee affirmed that this is not the case, and accreditation standards—including the Council of Legal Education and the Business School’s Triple Crown accreditation—will (and must) be maintained.
- Some submissions cited concerns about academic oversight. On balance, the Committee acknowledged these concerns but noted that maintaining a distinct identity for the Law School and Business School is a requirement for accreditation, ensuring effective academic governance is a necessity.
- Submissions suggested that no other institutions have similar faculty structures. It is, in fact, very common for schools of law to be part of larger organisational units. Other concerns related to the proposal for Law to be aligned strongly with Business rather than forming part of a broader interdisciplinary faculty. The Committee noted that while it is not as common for Law to be positioned with Business it is not unprecedented internationally. ([Appendix 1](#)).
- Concerns about the impact of the new structure on rankings were raised, with specific emphasis on the Law School’s reputation being affected by its association with Business. Submissions noted the importance of Law being able to hold business and government to account and if the perceived ability for Law to do that is questioned it may play into reputation. The Committee noted that ranking agencies do not evaluate faculty structures and all academic staff publishing in law journals, including those staff based in commercial law in the Faculty of Business and Economics, will already be included in the University’s subject ranking. It was also recognised that many of the disciplines in Business are ranked as highly or higher than the law discipline. That said, it was also acknowledged that reputation plays a significant role in rankings, particularly in Law, where 80% of the score is based on academic and employer perceptions. It was further considered that a comprehensive engagement strategy would be important in assuring stakeholders that Law would retain curricula and qualifications independence ensuring, ensuring a comprehensive and balanced curriculum, such that any adopted faculty re-arrangements

would not impact on the academic excellence of Law or on its important wider role.

Autonomy, identity, and governance structures

- The proposed structure raised concerns amongst submitters about Law's independence within a larger entity and the perception that future faculty leadership would be primarily Business/Commerce-focused.
- The Committee clarified that future Deans could be drawn from any of the disciplines, not exclusively from Business or related disciplines, despite the proposal that the current Business and Economics Dean would serve as the initial faculty Dean.
- There was strong recognition of the need to clearly define how Law and Business would maintain authority over key areas such as curriculum and qualifications.
- Concerns were raised about how to preserve the distinct identity of Law students within a larger faculty. The Committee discussed approaches to maintaining Law's unique student experience, including graduation experiences and student societies, while also exploring opportunities to enhance the student experience across disciplines.
- The language used in communications was noted as important, with a preference for terms such as "federated" or "aligned" schools rather than "merger" or "combined" to mitigate concerns about Law being subsumed into a larger structure.
- Concerns were raised about how staffing decisions would be managed under the new structure. The Committee emphasised that while some decisions may need to be made at the faculty level, it is essential that disciplinary expertise is protected, and input at the school level is given appropriate deference in decision-making.
- Ensuring clarity on faculty leadership roles, governance structures, and how key academic decisions are made will be vital to maintaining confidence in the proposed structure.
- Acknowledging feedback concerns, the Committee noted that structure must also support accreditation requirements and ensure governance and leadership arrangements are effective and equitable.

Recommendations

Should new faculty arrangements proceed, the Committee recommends:

- emphasising the retention of the identity of the Auckland Law School within the final faculty re-arrangement noting that this is not an unusual organisational structure amongst peer institutions internationally.

- emphasising the retention of the identity of the Auckland Business School as part of any final faculty re-arrangements.
- establishing a working group, led by the Faculty Executive Dean, working with a new or acting Dean of the Business School, the acting Dean of the Law School and others as appropriate, to propose fit-for-purpose governance structures and academic leadership roles at the schools' level that will support both schools to maintain appropriate independence and fulfil any external accreditation requirements. The group should also clearly outline how faculty leadership roles will contribute to leadership across the span of faculty disciplines, address the University's commitment to Māori and how Law academic staff will be appropriately incorporated into faculty leadership roles.
- ensuring governance structures recognise the importance of disciplinary expertise in staffing decisions. While some decisions may be made at the faculty level, disciplinary input should be given appropriate deference to maintain academic integrity and subject-matter leadership.
- ensuring distinct student experiences remain, including for graduation and student societies, while also exploring ways to enhance student opportunities within the new faculty structure. Establish a student discussion group to gather input on what should remain distinct and where collaboration could add value.

Reputation

- A key concern raised was that Law's proximity to Business could erode its independence and reputation, particularly in its function as a check on corporate and government power.
- The Committee noted that this concern stems partly from a broader distrust within parts of the legal profession toward corporate and business interests, and that addressing these reputational risks proactively is essential.
- There was discussion about the need to communicate clearly that the Law School remains distinct in its identity and curriculum, even within a larger organisational structure. It was noted that in comparable organisational arrangements, Law students continue to identify primarily as Law students, reinforcing the importance of maintaining this distinction in any future structure.
- Concerns were raised about the perception that this alignment could lead to a greater commercial focus in Law, even without curriculum changes. The Committee acknowledged that public perception, rather than actual structural changes, could influence reputational risk.

- Discussions also highlighted the need to consider the broader disciplinary ecosystem beyond just Law and Business. Exploring connections with other faculties (as exists today), such as Arts and Education, could help counter concerns about an overly commercialised focus.
- Discussions noted a risk of reputational loss for the University if these concerns are not addressed directly. The Committee emphasised the need for a structured and proactive external engagement plan, rather than remaining silent or reactive.
- The naming of the faculty was also discussed, with recognition that multiple layers of identity exist (faculty name, Law School, Business School, Business and Economics), and that administrative placement should not impact how the Law School and Business School are positioned or marketed externally.
- While there may be short-term concerns, the Committee noted that maintaining high educational standards, accreditation, clear governance structures, and strong engagement with internal and external stakeholders will ultimately reinforce Law's standing over time.

Recommendation

Should new faculty arrangements proceed, the Committee recommends:

- development of a clear communication strategy to address concerns from external stakeholders, including the legal profession, prospective students, and the wider community. Reinforce how the Law School will maintain its independence and core academic mission, ensuring its distinct role and ethical responsibilities.
- reinforcing that Law students and Business students retain a strong sense of identity, including distinct branding, student societies, and graduation experiences. Consider forming a student advisory group to guide how autonomy and collaboration are balanced within the new structure.

Qualifications, academic oversight and accreditation

The Committee noted that submissions raised concerns about potential long-term changes to degree structures and curriculum focus.

- A key concern was that the faculty's realignment could shift emphasis toward commerce-oriented law, making it less attractive to those studying or teaching broader legal disciplines.
- The New Zealand Council for Legal Education expressed concern that if accreditation and independence issues were not resolved, they might not support the proposal.

- Submissions emphasised the need for distinct governance structures to protect the academic autonomy of Law.
- The Committee acknowledged concerns about the Law School being "subsumed" and recommended reinforcing its identity through governance mechanisms.
- A common concern was that students would graduate with different qualifications. Committee members affirmed that this is not the case, and accreditation standards—including the Council of Legal Education and the Business School's Triple Crown accreditation—will (and must) be maintained.
- The Committee acknowledged these concerns and noted that maintaining distinct identities for the Law School and Business School and governance structures that support accreditation requirements will be important elements of any new faculty arrangements.
- The Committee emphasised the historical role of the Law School in shaping legal education in New Zealand and the importance of maintaining its independence from commercial or political influences.

Recommendation

Should new faculty arrangements proceed, the Committee recommends:

- a) structuring the new faculty to maintain independence for the Law School and the Business School with respect to their curricula and qualifications.
- b) establishing a separate Board of Studies for Law to ensure academic oversight, and a comprehensive and balanced legal education.

Rationale for change

Submissions frequently questioned the rationale for the proposed changes and sought greater clarity on the benefits.

- Many expressed scepticism about the "why" behind the proposal, particularly since students were not experiencing clear issues with the current structure.
- Committee members noted that leading the Law faculty presents significant challenges, not just due to the administrative demands of running a faculty, but also the concentrated academic leadership responsibilities placed on the Dean—given that all academic staff report directly to them. Additionally, the Law Dean faces unique external demands, such as accreditation requirements, engagement with the legal profession, and sector-wide regulatory changes, further stretching leadership capacity. Some Committee members suggested that the

proposal could provide an opportunity to alleviate these pressures by enabling a greater focus on long-term strategy and addressing broader sector-wide changes. However, others noted that it was unclear why a faculty combination was necessary to achieve this, as opposed to exploring alternative ways to distribute leadership. It was highlighted by some members that by reducing administrative demands, the proposed new faculty arrangements could enhance decision-making at the executive level, ultimately benefiting students. However, the Committee recognises that this rationale could have been made more explicit and clearer in the proposal.

- Discussions also highlighted staff briefings that referenced ‘future-proofing against market volatility’ and how having the Law School federated within a larger entity allows for greater agility in responding to changes in student demand, government funding priorities, or external economic pressures.
- It was acknowledged that the proposal document could have articulated these points with greater clarity and a plan should be established to ensure the wider strategic imperatives are clarified and well socialised.
- Some submissions saw potential benefits in improved collaboration but expressed uncertainty about how it would be realised or why Law and Business needed to merge. While collaboration between faculties does occur, Committee discussions noted it is neither widespread nor systematically structured. Submissions and discussions highlighted cultural, administrative, and logistical barriers that have hindered broader engagement. The Committee acknowledged that while a merger is not essential for collaboration, a more aligned or federated model could help lower barriers and provide a structured framework for joint initiatives in research, postgraduate curriculum development, and student experience. The challenge is ensuring collaboration is not just encouraged but embedded in faculty operations for long-term sustainability.

Recommendation

- Develop an engagement plan that clearly articulates more deeply the benefits, tailored accordingly by stakeholder group.
 - Strengthen messaging around collaboration opportunities and how aligning within a larger entity enhances the ability to leverage these opportunities effectively.
 - Address student concerns directly by emphasising academic and career benefits.
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Cost savings

- Submissions raised concerns that cost savings were a primary driver of the proposal, though the proposal itself does not indicate this.
- The Committee clarified that, irrespective of this proposal, the University faces broader financial pressures and must work towards a sustainable operating surplus. Cost-saving measures will be necessary regardless of whether this proposal proceeds.
- The Committee also discussed how a larger faculty structure could offer economies of scale, potentially insulating Law from broader University financial pressures.
- In a larger faculty, shared services could improve efficiency and would help sustain key professional staff roles. The costs associated with maintaining two separate faculties would be avoided, allowing resources to be concentrated on student- and staff-facing activities rather than management overhead.
- The Committee also emphasised the importance of a professional staff structure that is resilient to market forces and tertiary sector funding changes, reducing the need for reactive cost-cutting measures in the future. A more sustainable model within a larger entity would enable long-term stability and better support both staff and students.

Recommendation

- Clearly communicate the University's financial position in broader messaging, emphasising that the proposal is primarily driven by strategic and operational considerations rather than cost-cutting. However, acknowledge that cost reductions, including professional staffing costs, will be necessary regardless of whether the proposal proceeds or not.
- If the proposal proceeds, design future faculty structures that recognise and acknowledge the value of specialised professional services and student support for each school.

Public and private departmental split

- Many submissions strongly opposed the proposed departmental split, seeing it as unnecessary and out of step with how Law faculties typically operate. The idea of dividing Law into two separate departments did not resonate with those in academic law or legal practice, as such a split is rare and does not reflect the holistic nature of the discipline. Submitters found the proposal confusing and unfamiliar, and it was only in the committee meeting that its administrative purpose, connected with managing a complex unit, became clear—something submitters were unlikely to have considered.

- The Committee discussed the evolution of departmental structures within the Law Faculty and the challenges associated with its governance:
 - Historically, there have been multiple iterations of discussions on restructuring within the Law Faculty, driven in part by the increasing administrative burden on the Dean. The Director of HR has been involved in many of these discussions, including considerations of whether departmental heads could alleviate the workload.
 - Committee discussions noted that the primary goal of the departmental proposal has been to improve governance, strategic decision-making and make the structure more efficient and ease the administrative load of the Dean of the Law School, rather than splitting curriculum or disciplines. However, confusion over how a departmental structure might impact Law's identity and the holistic, intertwined nature of the Law discipline has led to concerns from stakeholders.
- The position of Commercial Law also came through strongly in submissions. Many submissions strongly opposed the proposed departmental split, with some of those submissions highlighting concerns about the future placement of Commercial Law academics:
 - Submissions raised questions about whether Commercial Law should move entirely to the Law School or retain its position within Business.
 - Committee members noted that while research interests align, teaching methods differ significantly between Law and Commercial Law. While this does not preclude future opportunities for academics from both areas to contribute across disciplines, discussions acknowledged that these differences in pedagogy present challenges. At the same time, it was noted that Commercial Law, as a smaller entity, lacks subdiscipline-specific dedicated mentorship and academic support within the Business School, which could be alleviated through closer alignment with the Law School on the research side, while still maintaining pedagogical distinctions where appropriate.
 - The Committee recognised that Commercial Law is a small but strategically significant entity within Auckland, and greater alignment with the Law School could strengthen its position and provide additional mentorship opportunities. However, the Committee noted that these goals did not necessarily require Commercial Law to join the Law School, and that the members of the Commercial Law Department joining the Law School was just one of several options that could be considered in the next

phase, should the proposal proceed. It was noted that Auckland's strength in Commercial Law could be further enhanced through closer collaboration with the Law School.

- Additionally, there was discussion around whether students in Business benefit from having Commercial Law within their faculty, particularly concerning accounting accreditation requirements.

Recommendation

Should new faculty arrangements proceed, the Committee recommends:

- that the Law School's departmental structure not be split as outlined in the proposal document.
- that a working group should be established to explore structural options that reduce administrative burdens on school and faculty leadership while strengthening beneficial partnerships with Commercial Law.
- the working group should assess whether moving Commercial Law to the Law School would provide better alignment and academic support, keeping in mind differences in teaching approaches.

Consultation process and timelines

- Submissions expressed concerns over the timing of consultation process, particularly over the summer months. The Committee noted the extended period of consultation which was adopted by the Vice-Chancellor because of the time of year.
- Submissions raised concerns about the speed of implementation, particularly given concurrent initiatives such as the JD programme.
- Concerns were also raised about the capacity of faculty staff to successfully launch the JD programme while simultaneously integrating into a new faculty structure (if the proposal proceeds). There was recognition that both initiatives require significant focus, and implementing them concurrently could detract from the success of the JD programme.
- The Committee highlighted the importance of providing certainty for professional staff if the proposal proceeds. Prolonging the implementation timeline could exacerbate anxiety, impact staff morale, and increase the risk of losing key talent.
- While having a level of certainty is important, the Committee noted that the proposed mid-year implementation timeline, should the proposal proceed, may be too short to ensure a smooth transition.

Recommendation

Should new faculty arrangements proceed, the Committee recommends considering extending the timeline for implementation to enable the mitigation of risks.

Engagement with Māori staff and students

The Committee discussed the engagement of Māori staff and students in the formal submission process;

- Some submissions from Māori staff raised concerns regarding the lack of early engagement before the proposal was developed.
- It was acknowledged that during consultation the Pro Vice-Chancellor Māori and Director Human Resources led a session for Māori staff, where broad elements of the proposal were discussed. It was noted that this was not well attended by law staff.
- The Committee highlighted that communications are ongoing about future engagement with the Vice-Chancellor.

Recommendation

Should new faculty arrangements proceed, the Committee recommends that the implementation approach include a structured engagement process with Māori staff and students, ensuring their perspectives are well considered.

Professional staff, student support services and student experience

- Submissions highlighted concerns about maintaining specialised student support, particularly for Māori and Pacific (M&P) students, and ensuring subject-matter expertise is retained.
- The Committee acknowledged that the Law School currently benefits from high levels of resourcing in support services comparatively. While overall professional staffing costs may need to be reduced in light of University financial pressures, it is critical that the design of future faculty structures recognises and acknowledges the value of specialised professional services and student support.
- There was strong recognition of the distinct and highly tailored nature of M&P student support in Law, particularly in areas such as navigating legal education, preparing for law firm interviews, and addressing the unique barriers M&P students face in entering the legal profession.
- Concerns were raised about the potential loss of institutional knowledge if specialised support roles were not retained, as these staff have deep expertise in addressing the specific needs of Law students.

- The Committee also noted external reports on legal education, including those focused on making it more bi-jural, bicultural, and bilingual, which should inform future student support strategies.
- Careers support was identified as another critical area, with feedback indicating that Law and Business students require distinct career guidance due to different recruitment processes, peak hiring periods, and employer expectations. However, in a larger support unit, career teams could provide backup for each other during peak periods.
- The Committee emphasised feedback concerns on the importance of ensuring any transition does not disrupt the student experience, particularly if changes coincide with the start of a semester.
- Given the importance of certainty for staff, additional transitional resources may be required to ensure a smooth shift without disruption to student experience.

Recommendation

Should new faculty arrangements proceed, the Committee recommends the:

- development of a solid transition plan to ensure continuity of student support services, minimising disruption and safeguarding the student experience. This should include support for Māori and Pacific students and access to broader pastoral care.
- that future student support structures should be informed by submission feedback (shared, with permission, with detailed organisational design team), and appropriately reflect the distinct needs of Law and Business students, including provision of careers services.

Appendix 1: Law School Comparison

Internal memorandum

Date: 24 January 2025

To: Review Committee for proposed new faculty arrangements: Business and Economics, Law

Prepared by: Virginia Hunter, Senior Researcher and Policy Advisor and Steve Williamson, Senior Function Performance Consultant

Subject: Law school characteristics across the Group of 8 and Russell Group universities

Introduction

The proposal for a combined Business and Economics, and Law faculty aims to leverage the strengths of both faculties, creating a larger academic community that enhances research support, enables postgraduate growth, leverages complementary strengths and offers expanded opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration. This proposed structure would align more closely with other University of Auckland faculties in size and capacity, creating a foundation for future strategic impact and resilience.

This memo focuses on an external comparison of law schools, examining the reporting and governance structure, academic structure, student and staff composition and ranking of law schools in the Group of 8 and Russell Group. Key findings include:

- Seventy-three percent (19 out of 26) of law schools reviewed as peer institutions in Appendix A are part of a larger faculty. Arts, humanities, and social sciences are the most common faculties that house a school of law, particularly among the Russell Group Universities. Appendix A illustrates the variation in reporting lines, UEC membership and department details. Law schools that are part of a larger faculty are highlighted in yellow.
- Among the 26 universities identified in this memo, only two have a dean of law who reports to the vice-chancellor, and three have a dean of law that sits on the university leadership team. Law deans more commonly report to the chief academic officer (7) or faculty dean (17).
- Based on a review of university websites, only 1 of 26 law schools is further divided into academic departments, while one other notes "academic areas".
- Composition benchmarking shows that UoA is about average in the share of law students as a percentage of all students. UoA does have a much smaller share of postgraduate students compared to peer universities, here only 9.2% of law students are postgraduate. The average share of postgraduate students at the 8 peer universities that submit benchmarkable data is 25%.
- UoA is about average in the share of professional and academic staff as a proportion of all staff.
- When looking at QS World University Rankings by Subject 2024: Law & Legal Studies, law schools ranked similarly to UoA are part of a larger faculty.

Law discipline student and staff composition at the University of Auckland and peer universities

Percentage of all university students who are students in the discipline of law: Across the five universities in the Group of Eight and three in the Russell Group that submit discipline-based benchmarking data to UniForum, law discipline students as a percentage of all students ranges from 8.3% to 1.4%, University of Auckland is on the higher end of this range at 6.6%. Students in Commercial Law are included in the UoA data.

Table 1. Law discipline student FTE as a share of all students

University	Total Student FTE (all disciplines)	Law Discipline Student FTE	% of all students in law school
Uni F – Go8	17,371.3	1,449.2	8.3%
Uni B – Go8	55,028.2	3,805.8	6.9%
Uni C – UoA	35,307.5	2,334.8	6.6%
Uni I – RG	29,559.0	1,797.0	6.0%
Uni A – Go8	49,122.9	2,568.1	5.2%
Uni D – Go8	59,385.8	2,824.6	4.8%
Uni E – Go8	42,193.0	1,543.9	3.7%
Uni G – RG	26,319.1	1,587.1	2.2%
Uni H – RG	33,998.3	1,717.1	1.4%

Notes: Includes most recently submitted data, either 2022 or 2023. Includes Commercial Law.

Percentage of law discipline students who are postgraduate: When compared to law schools within the Group of Eight, UoA has a much smaller than average percentage of postgraduate students studying within the discipline of law at 9.2%, although two Russell Group universities have a smaller share of postgraduate law students. Across the five universities in the Group of Eight and three in the Russell Group that submit discipline-based benchmarking data to UniForum, the range is 53.8% to 6.3% and the average is 25.2%.

Table 2. Postgraduate law discipline students as a share of all law discipline students

University	Law Discipline Student FTE	Law Discipline Student PG FTE (PGR+PGT)	% of law school students that are PG
Uni D – Go8	2,824.6	1,520.8	53.8%
Uni A – Go8	2,568.1	1,107.4	43.1%

University	Law Discipline Student FTE	Law Discipline Student PG FTE (PGR+PGT)	% of law school students that are PG
Uni F – Go8	1,449.2	431.0	29.7%
Uni B – Go8	3,805.8	954.4	25.1%
Uni I - RG	1,797.0	413.0	22.9%
Uni E – Go8	1,543.9	207.8	13.5%
Uni C - UoA	2,334.8	215.9	9.2%
Uni H – RG	1,717.1	125.7	7.3%
Uni G – RG	1,587.1	101.2	6.3%

Notes: Includes most recently submitted data, either 2022 or 2023. Includes Commercial Law.

Percentage of all university staff who are staff in the law discipline:

Professional staff: Across the five universities in the Group of Eight and three in the Russell Group that submit discipline-based benchmarking data to UniForum, professional law staff as a percentage of staff across all disciplines ranges from 4.2% to 1.3%. University of Auckland is slightly below average with 1.8%.

Table 3. Law discipline professional staff FTE as a share of all disciplines professional staff

University	Law Discipline Professional wFTE	Professional wFTE (all disciplines)	% Law pFTE/All Disciplines pFTE
Uni F – Go8	62.1	1,470.6	4.2%
Uni A – Go8	78.1	1,960.1	4.0%
Uni G – RG	34.0	1,387.3	2.5%
Uni B – Go8	47.7	1,971.3	2.4%
Uni H – RG	36.4	1,576.1	2.3%
Uni I - RG	32.3	1,482.5	2.2%
Uni C - UoA	27.6	1,541.7	1.8%
Uni D – Go8	31.7	2,252.4	1.4%
Uni E – Go8	29.4	2,279.2	1.3%

Notes: Includes most recently submitted data, either 2022 or 2023. Includes Commercial Law.

Academic staff: Across the five universities in the Group of Eight and three in the Russell Group that submit discipline-based benchmarking data to UniForum, law staff as a percentage of staff across all disciplines ranges from 4.5% to 1.4%. University of Auckland is about average with 2.9% of academic staff in the discipline of law.

Table 4. Law discipline academic staff as a share of all disciplines academic staff

University	Law Discipline Academic FTE	Academic FTE (all disciplines)	Law aFTE/All Disciplines aFTE
Uni F – Go8	73.1	1,631.4	4.5%
Uni A – Go8	133.5	3,382.5	3.9%
Uni H – RG	106.2	3,456.8	3.1%
Uni I – RG	99.4	3,337.4	3.0%
Uni C (UoA)	65.4	2,290.6	2.9%
Uni B – Go8	89.4	3,147.0	2.8%
Uni G – RG	70.1	2,603.1	2.7%
Uni D – Go8	85.1	3,512.3	2.4%
Uni E – Go8	46.8	3,359.9	1.4%

Faculty structure and QS World University Rankings by Subject: Law & Legal Studies

When looking at QS 2024 Law & Legal Studies rankings data, most law schools ranked similarly to University of Auckland’s Law School are part of a larger faculty, particularly schools at Russell Group Universities. These law schools have maintained a distinct identity unhindered by their inclusion in a larger faculty. At times the term ‘school of law’ has been maintained when administratively the law school functions as a department.

There also seems to be a correlation between overall university rankings and law school rankings. It is important to note that administrative structure is not a factor in QS or THE rankings methodologies. In the table below, law schools that are part of a larger faculty are highlighted in yellow.

Table 5. QS World Rankings, Law & Legal Studies and overall university rankings

University	QS rankings of law schools	QS 2024 overall university ranking
University of Melbourne*	10	14
UNSW Sydney	=12	=19
University College London	14	9
King's College London	15	40
University of Sydney	16	=19
University of Edinburgh	=20	22
Australian National University	25	=34
Monash University	=36	42
Queen Mary University of London	=38	=145
Durham University	48	78
University of Queensland	=52	43
University of Auckland	55	68
University of Manchester	=57	32
University of Bristol	61	55
University of Glasgow	=68	=76
University of Nottingham	78	=100
Queen's University Belfast	101-150	202
University of Adelaide	101-150	89
University of Birmingham	101-150	84
University of Leeds	101-150	75
University of Warwick	101-150	67
University of Western Australia	101-150	72
University of Exeter	151-200	153
University of Liverpool	151-200	=176
University of Sheffield	151-200	104
University of Southampton	151-200	=81

Note: Some Russell Group universities were not included in this analysis, University of Cambridge, Cardiff University, Imperial College London, London School of Economics, Newcastle University, University of Oxford and University of York.

*At the Melbourne Law School degrees are only offered at the graduate level

Faculty structure and THE ranking changes over time

It is challenging to determine if merging a law school into a larger faculty has any influence on rankings because of the newness of subject rankings. The QS and THE World University Rankings by Subject were established in 2011 and 2018 respectively, more recently than many faculties that house a law school were established. The table below provides an overview of rankings changes at law schools that are part of a larger faculty and those that are independent since 2018 and does not indicate a clear trend. THE rankings data is used in this analysis because it is more easily available. Change over time within one rank is marked as no change. Of the 20 law schools in this analysis where THE data was available in both 2018 and 2024, 13 (65%) are part of a larger faculty. Of the 20 law schools analysed, three experienced negligible change in their rankings, five had an increase in rankings, and 12 a decline in rankings. Generally, as a ranking system grows in popularity and more universities submit data, a greater proportion of universities will experience a decline in rankings.

Table 5. THE World University Rankings, Law in 2018 and 2024 for select Go8 and Russell Group

University	THE 2018	THE 2024	THE Trend
University of Melbourne	7	8	↔
University College London	8	12	↓
University of Edinburgh	14	13	↔
King's College London	=25	27	↓
University of Manchester	28	93	↓
UNSW Sydney	=31	32	↔
University of Sydney	33	40	↓
Queen Mary University of London	37	50	↓
University of Nottingham	40	=45	↓
Australian National University	42	=21	↑
University of Glasgow	48	=43	↑
University of Bristol	49	89	↓
Durham University	51	=60	↓
University of Queensland	54	=74	↓
University of Sheffield	=56	151-175	↓
University of Leeds	64	59	↑
Monash University	68	64	↑

University	THE 2018	THE 2024	THE Trend
University of Birmingham	=86	99	↓
University of Southampton	89	151-175	↓
University of Warwick	90	83	↑
University of Adelaide	Not available	101-125	
University of Exeter	Not available	101-125	
University of Liverpool	Not available	101-125	
University of Auckland	Not available	126-150	
Queen's University Belfast	Not available	151-175	
University of Western Australia	Not available	151-175	

Note: Some Russell Group universities were not included in this analysis, University of Cambridge, Cardiff University, Imperial College London, London School of Economics, Newcastle University, University of Oxford and University of York.

Characteristics of the QS top 25 Law & Legal Studies rankings law schools

The following table aims to provide information on if Auckland Law School's trajectory of entering the top 25 law schools in the world in the QS rankings would be affected by joining a larger faculty. In 2024, 20% (5 out of 25) of law schools in the QS top 25 were part of a larger faculty or administrative unit. It is more common for schools in the top 25 to offer only graduate degrees, 40% (10 out of 25) are focused on graduate education and do not offer bachelor's degree options.

Rank	University	Faculty if part of a larger faculty	Graduate degrees only
1	Harvard University		✓
2	University of Oxford	Social Sciences Division	
3	University of Cambridge	School of Humanities and Social Sciences	
4	Yale University		✓
5	Stanford University		✓
6	New York University		✓
7	The London School of Economics and Political Science	Law school operates as an independent administrative unit, LSE is a constituent college awarding degrees under the University of London	
8	Columbia University		✓



Rank	University	Faculty if part of a larger faculty	Graduate degrees only
9	University of California, Berkeley		✓
10	The University of Melbourne		✓
11	University of Chicago		✓
=12	National University of Singapore		
=12	UNSW Sydney		
14	University College London	Law school operates as an independent administrative unit, within a constituent college awarding degrees under the University of London	
15	King's College London	Law school operates as an independent administrative unit, within a constituent college awarding degrees under the University of London	
16	The University of Sydney		
=17	University of Toronto		✓
=17	Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne	Division/Area of Law and Political Science	
19	University of California, Los Angeles		✓
=20	The University of Edinburgh	College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	
=20	The University of Hong Kong		
22	The University of Tokyo		
23	Georgetown University		
24	Leiden University		
25	Australian National University	College of Law, Governance and Policy	

Appendix A. Law school governance and structure at the University of Auckland, Group of 8, and the Russell Group

This table illustrates the variation in reporting lines, UEC membership and department details. Law schools that are part of a larger faculty are highlighted in yellow. This table represents structures as found January 2025 but may not be accurate moving forward as other universities have planned restructures. For example, Australian National University's restructure to create a College of Law, Governance and Policy came into effect 1 Jan 2025.

University	Who dean of law reports to	Dean of law on UEC?	Academic Department details
University of Auckland	Provost	No	Auckland Law School has no academic departments. Commercial Law sits in Business and Economics
University of Otago	Pro-Vice Chancellor (Humanities)	No	No evidence of departments on website
Group of Eight			
University of Adelaide	Executive Dean of Arts, Business, Law and Economics	No	No evidence of law departments on website
Australian National University	Dean, College of Law, Governance and Policy	Yes	No evidence of departments on website
University of Melbourne	Provost	No	No evidence of departments on website
Monash University	Vice-Chancellor and President	Yes	No evidence of departments on website
UNSW Sydney	Provost	Yes	School of Global and Public Law School of Law, Society and Criminology School of Private and Commercial Law
University of Queensland	Executive Dean Faculty of Business, Economics and Law	No	No evidence of law departments on website
University of Sydney	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor	No	No evidence of departments on website
University of Western Australia	Senor Deputy Vice-Chancellor	No	No evidence of departments on website
Russell Group			
University of Birmingham	Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College, College of Arts and Law	No	No evidence of law departments on website

University	Who dean of law reports to	Dean of law on UEC?	Academic Department details
University of Bristol	Pro Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Arts, Law and Social Sciences	No	No evidence of law departments on website
Durham University	Executive Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and Health	No	No evidence of law departments on website
University of Edinburgh	Vice Principal, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	No	No evidence of law departments on website
University of Exeter	Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean, Faculty of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences	No	No evidence of law departments on website
University of Glasgow	Vice Principal and Head of College of Social Sciences	No	No evidence of law departments on website
King's College London	Senior Vice President (Academic)	Unclear	No evidence of law departments on website
University of Leeds	Executive Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences	No	No evidence of law departments on website
University of Liverpool	Executive Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences	No	School of Law and Social Justice divided into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Liverpool Law School - Department of Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology
University of Manchester	Dean of Faculty of Humanities	No	No evidence of law departments on website
University of Nottingham	Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor Social Sciences	No	No evidence of law departments on website
Queen Mary University of London	Vice-Principal and Executive Dean (Humanities and Social Sciences)	No	No evidence of law departments on website
Queen's University Belfast	Pro-Vice Chancellor Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	No	No evidence of law departments on website
University of Sheffield	Vice-President and Head of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities	No	"Academic areas" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law

University	Who dean of law reports to	Dean of law on UEC?	Academic Department details
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Criminology - Professional Legal Education
University of Southampton	Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences	No	No
University College London	Vice-Provost (Faculties)	No	No evidence of law departments on website
University of Warwick	Provost	No	No evidence of law departments on website

Note: Some Russell Group universities were not included in this analysis, University of Cambridge, Cardiff University, Imperial College London, London School of Economics, Newcastle University, University of Oxford and University of York.