



UNIVERSITY OF
AUCKLAND
Waipapa Taumata Rau
NEW ZEALAND

Consideration of the future organisation of the Faculties of Law and Business & Economics

Proposal Document
12 November 2024



Why are we proposing a change now?

The University is proposing new faculty arrangements to strengthen its structure and enhance our ability to deliver impactful teaching, research, and community engagement. This proposal also responds to feedback from recent consultations on faculty arrangements, where staff and stakeholders emphasised the importance of balanced faculty structures that consider each faculty's unique needs, resources, and strategic alignment with the University's broader goals.

By combining the Faculties of Law and Business & Economics, the aim of the proposal is to create a comprehensive faculty that brings together distinct and complementary disciplinary strengths.

This proposed combined faculty structure would foster greater collaboration across a wide range of legal and business disciplines. It would provide economies of scale that enhance resources and support for research, particularly benefiting academic staff and students through increased access to donor-funded research centres and specialised support that have not previously been available in Law.

Currently, the Faculty of Law's smaller scale limits its ability to fully leverage its strengths. The proposed alignment with Business & Economics allows both faculties to address this and to create a new faculty that positions the University as the national leader in business and law. This proposed new arrangement would reinforce Auckland's role as New Zealand's commercial and legal hub, better positioning the University to support the needs of the business and legal communities. This combined faculty would act as a gateway, where business leaders gain direct access to legal expertise and legal professionals draw on a range of commercial, corporate, and related expertise. It also would strengthen Auckland's standing as a centre of innovation and interdisciplinary knowledge, benefiting our students, staff, and society at large.



Proposed changes

Feedback is being sought on the creation of a new faculty, combining the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Business & Economics. Key proposed recommended changes include:

- That the Faculty of Law become part of the Faculty of Business & 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 Law School) are appointed. The current Dean of Business & Economics would be the Dean of the combined Faculty.

Enhancing organisational effectiveness

Synergy

A combined Faculty of Business & Economics and Law would establish a dynamic gateway, which could enhance the University's role as a vital bridge to industry. This proposed new faculty arrangement would offer the business community expanded access to a broad spectrum of academic legal expertise, while providing the legal sector with direct insight into commercial and corporate practices essential for addressing today's complex challenges.



Integration

This alignment is proposed not only to streamline structures but to foster interdisciplinary research and collaboration, driving greater impact across disciplines. Law brings strengths in public law and private law, while Business and Economics offers expertise in accounting, economics, international business, marketing, information systems, and broadly in technology and management. By uniting these complementary strengths, we could create a platform that amplifies academic innovation, strengthens our strategic adaptability, and delivers heightened value to students, staff, and external partners alike.



Resilience & capacity

A combined Faculty of Business & Economics and Law, with 8,000+ EFTS, would allow us to streamline resources and support structures, aligning more closely with other faculties in size and capacity. This structure would support our ability to grow and diversify offerings, expand staff research opportunities, and optimise funding across all areas of Law, including environmental, tax, indigenous, and technology-focused legal studies. This balanced approach would provide Law with greater resources, ensuring its resilience and growth potential for the future.



Other key benefits

Enhanced collaboration across related disciplines	The new faculty arrangements would help foster synergies between law and business, enhancing collaboration opportunities for disciplines such as law and technology, environmental and commercial law, and indigenous legal studies. This integration would broaden the University's research capabilities, enabling faculty to address complex, interdisciplinary issues that align with Auckland's role as a national hub for legal and business innovation.
Advancing postgraduate law and Working Professional programmes	A combined faculty would elevate postgraduate and JD programmes by leveraging the Business School's expertise in working-professional programmes and its strong infrastructure, including specialised support for professional students and optimised delivery of degrees such as the LLM, MTaxS, MLS, and MIP. The Business School's reputation and capability in designing and delivering postgraduate professional programmes provides the Law School with a valuable opportunity to expand its offerings, foster research-teaching synergies, and introduce courses in emerging fields like fintech, environmental law, and indigenous law.
Enhancing research centres	Cross-faculty collaboration would enrich research centres across both faculties. Juncture, the Energy Centre, Aotearoa Centre for Leadership and Governance, and the Centre for Research on Modern Slavery, for example, could benefit from law faculty expertise, while the Law and Technology Centre would gain from the technology-focused research within Business. This integration supports transdisciplinary research and strengthens access to strategic funding.
Unified professional schools	A joint faculty would build on both faculties' strengths in professional education, combining expertise in ethics, career support, and mentorship programmes, enhancing graduate preparation for law and accounting careers.
Pathways to Law in postgraduate study	The combined faculty would create accessible pathways for business students to pursue legal studies, fostering a diverse student body and enriching the learning environment.

Other key benefits (continued)

Enhanced research funding opportunities	With economies of scale, the new structure could support a broader range of research areas and funding initiatives across both faculties, helping expand research output and impact.
Strengthening commercial law	As New Zealand's commercial hub, Auckland should be recognised as the centre of commercial law excellence, with the University of Auckland leading the field. Currently, commercial law expertise is split between faculties, limiting natural synergies. A combined commercial law group would create the critical mass necessary to drive impactful research. Integrating faculties would also support the Centre for Law and Business, expanding mentorship, and linking the commercial law group with senior academics for strengthened collaboration.
Leveraging combined strengths	By combining strengths in Business and Law, the University could prioritise fintech, corporate governance, and international trade law, enriching courses in HR, marketing, and entrepreneurship. Programmes like MTaxS and MIP would benefit from faculty-wide expertise, keeping the University competitive and aligned with global trends.
Economies of scale and faculty resilience	Amalgamation allows for economies of scale, optimised resources, and increased resilience, benefiting the Law School with access to a broader resource base and potential internal career pathways.
Fostering inclusivity	Currently, the Faculty of Law has limited interdisciplinary links across the University. A unified faculty would encourage connections between law and business academics, fostering wider University engagement.

What do we hope to achieve?

This has the potential to generate enhanced leadership and organisational effectiveness, including:

Better alignment with strategic goals	A tighter faculty and leadership structure strengthens the alignment of academic leaders toward shared objectives, ensuring that faculties work cohesively to achieve the University's strategic goals. This streamlined approach also simplifies performance tracking, making it easier to monitor progress and implement corrective actions when needed, supporting continuous advancement toward the University's vision.
Improved collaboration	A streamlined leadership and faculty structure fosters stronger inter-faculty relationships, promoting enhanced transparency, understanding, and opportunities for collaboration.
Enhanced flexibility and adaptability	A more agile academic structure allows the University to swiftly respond to changing market demands, technological innovations, and regulatory requirements. This flexibility nurtures a culture where new ideas are not only encouraged but can also be implemented efficiently, fostering continuous growth and improvement.

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Auckland, New Zealand, showing a dense urban landscape with numerous high-rise buildings. In the foreground, a large green area contains several university buildings, including a prominent white building with a central tower and a large, modern, curved building. The sky is bright and hazy.

Feedback process

We are seeking feedback from staff, students, and key external stakeholders on the proposed new faculty arrangements, including the options as outlined on [page 3](#) of this proposal document.

- The feedback period opens on Tuesday 12 November 2024 and closes on Monday 20 January 2025 at 5pm.
- Feedback can be provided via the [online feedback form](#).

Next steps

Following the closure of the feedback period, all submissions will be thoughtfully reviewed by a Review Committee comprising both staff and students. A recommendation document and advice from Senate will be considered by Council in March.

What	When
Feedback period	12 November 2024 – 20 January 2025
Review Committee to consider feedback and make recommendations on any alternate proposals	w/c 3 February 2025
Senate discussion	24 February 2025
Council meeting	17 March 2025

If the decision is made to proceed:

- The new faculty arrangements would be progressed to take effect from Quarter 3 2025. The Vice-Chancellor is supportive of Law being in the name of a combined faculty and, should the proposal be adopted, consultation with colleagues and Senate would be undertaken accordingly.
- Transition leadership would be established to ensure the changes were effectively managed, minimising any impacts to teaching and research.
- Substantive academic roles would remain unchanged. A revised academic leadership structure would be proposed by the Dean of the combined faculty.
- Professional staff structures would be reviewed to consider any necessary changes based on the needs of the new faculty. There would be full consultation over any specific proposed changes to structures and roles at that time.

Any questions?

Send them to strategicinitiative@auckland.ac.nz



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