

Teaching and Learning Policy

Information Literacy

POLICY

This policy is concerned with the enhancement of information literacy capabilities of students. The University of Auckland is committed to ensuring that all members of the University community have the opportunity to become knowledgeable about and use information resources effectively. It recognises that all students need to be able to use information resources in ways that enhance their learning and research activities.

Introduction

The University of Auckland's Strategic Plan, 2005 – 2012, states that “ we expect our graduates to be independent and critical thinkers with an openness to new ideas, possessing intellectual curiosity and integrity, to have a mastery of a body of knowledge and professional skills, to use information discerningly, to show tolerance and an understanding of diverse value systems and views, and to have the potential and the wish to contribute in a leadership role to national and global intellectual, social, scientific, economic and cultural development.” A strategy to achieve this goal is to “maintain a programme of regular reviews of curricula, educational objectives and teaching delivery by all faculties and departments so that the teaching and learning of the University reflect developments in the discipline or disciplines, and meet the requirements of the graduate profile and the needs of students”.

The University of Auckland accepts that Information Literacy is the set of intellectual capabilities, knowledge and skills needed to use information at a level appropriate to the position, work environment, and discipline of the individual and the ability to continue to develop these skills into the future. Although Universities have traditionally equipped students with the skills to access and use information, the ongoing development of information and communication technologies has made these skills more complex and created an increased need to provide students with specialised training and knowledge.

Information literacy is relevant in all learning environments and fields of endeavour. The importance of information literacy has been recognised in the University of Auckland Graduate Profiles.

- “An ability to recognize when information is needed and a capacity to locate, evaluate and use this information effectively”, and
- “A capacity for critical, conceptual and reflective thinking”.

Developing information literacy skills through teaching and learning enhances students' tertiary education experience, and provides a basis for life-long learning, independence and effective participation in their communities.

The University has invested significantly in its Library and other collections, which support teaching and learning. In order to equip all students with the ability to gain the maximum advantage from these information resources and the world of learning that they can open up, the University has developed this policy and associated programmes and activities.

Objectives

The objectives of the Information Literacy Policy are:

- to emphasise the importance of information literacy skills for resource-based, student-centred, lifelong learning
- to ensure that graduates enter the workforce with information literacy skills
- to ensure that information resources are used as effectively as possible in the teaching and learning activities of the University
- to ensure that information literacy is embedded into the academic curriculum of the University
- to articulate the roles and responsibilities of the University's key contributors to the development of information literate graduates
- to ensure that the ethical and legal issues involved with using information resources are fully understood.

Definition of skills

Information literacy enables individuals to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate and use information effectively. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning. It is a prerequisite for lifelong learning.

The University of Auckland has adopted the definitions and standards of the Australian and New Zealand Information Literacy Framework as developed by ANZIIL (Australian and New Zealand Institute for Information Literacy). The Framework outlines "six core standards which underpin information literacy acquisition, understanding and application by an individual. These standards identify that the information literate person:

- recognises the need for information and determines the nature and extent of the information needed
- finds needed information effectively and efficiently
- critically evaluates information and the information seeking process
- manages information collected or generated
- applies prior and new information to construct new concepts or create new understandings
- uses information with understanding and acknowledges cultural, ethical, economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information".

Individual disciplines may require additional skills and these should be embedded in the associated curricula.

Roles and Responsibilities within the University

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the University Librarian are designated as having responsibility within the University for the information literacy policy. Each is responsible for implementing policy and reporting on performance to the appropriate University Committees, namely, Teaching and Learning Quality Committee and Library Committee.

Deans of Faculties and Heads of Departments and Schools, in collaboration with the University Library, are responsible for:

- ensuring that students in their Faculties, Departments and Schools have the opportunity to develop and use information literacy competencies in the course of learning and research
- incorporating appropriate strategies in their Teaching and Learning Plans

- recognising the need for continual enhancement and updating of information literacy skills

Academic staff are responsible for ensuring that information literacy skills have been embedded in the curricula, teaching, learning and assessment processes. Academic staff, librarians and learning support providers are partners in providing opportunities for students to achieve the ANZIIL standards in the context of their disciplines.

The University Library provides leadership in policy formulation and planning for information literacy within the University; works with academic staff to integrate information literacy objectives into course curricula, outlines and content; and works with the Centre for Academic Development and Board of Graduate Studies to develop a sustainable training and support model in the area of information literacy.

The University Library and the Centre for Academic Development, working in close collaboration with the Faculties and foundation programmes, are responsible for delivering appropriate information literacy training opportunities for students.

Sources

Australian and New Zealand Information Literacy Framework: principles, standards and practice. (2004). Retrieved Jan 10, 2005, from <http://www.anziil.org/resources/Info%20lit%202nd%20edition.pdf>
