

2020 MID-YEAR REPORT



Changing the way we work and learn

AUT Learning Transformation LAB (altLAB) is a newly created central service entity established in 2020; a reimagined centre for learning and teaching with a distinctive mission: build capacity, enable others, create community, strengthen innovation and our identity.

altLAB provides colleagues with access to a range of professional learning expertise to support teaching and educational practice and in doing so enhances the quality of learning for our students. Our shift in approach embeds a holistic view of learning and teaching, in context. We cultivate practices of service with manaaki, fostering connections that are based on reliable support and creative solutions.

In the first half of the year, our vision of **changing the way we work and learn** took form in unimagined ways and the outcomes thus far have exceeded our expectations. As the University navigated a changing landscape and faced unprecedented circumstances associated with COVID-19, we responded to the needs and priorities of the AUT community and adapted the way we work and learn.

To support our colleagues we initiated more cross functional collaboration, distributed expertise and provided leadership in finding solutions to contemporary educational challenges. Applying what we know in unique contexts whilst learning from and with others, enhancing what we do by doing it differently.

This mid-year report celebrates our efforts, demonstrates our reflection on key learnings and outlines the approaches we will initiate as we continue to support teaching and learning.

“

This is an exciting time to be working in learning and teaching at AUT. The future of technology-enhanced learning is bright and being at New Zealand's University of Technology means we have a special role to play. We are looking forward to extending the remarkable work that has begun in 2020 into a future with engaging multimedia learning, more flexible learner-driven approaches, virtual reality, and highly connected student experiences which extend well beyond our campuses and make a difference in our communities. We're just getting started.”



Associate Professor Benjamin Kehrwald

Director of Professional Learning/Head of altLAB

“

altLAB is the realisation of a shared vision to support our continual growth and creativity as educators. As a new entity, altLAB seeks to define a new way of thinking about how we work and learn and always with a view to how that translates into the student learning experience, and AUT more broadly, as a thoroughly modern university – from new programmes of required professional learning, to new service level agreements with faculties, to new platforms of communication and new entities, such as the AUT Academy to broaden our impact. We're only six months along and I'm very excited to see where the next six take us. Watch this space; we've only just begun.”



Professor Gayle Morris

Pro Vice Chancellor Learning and Teaching

Our Initiatives

During the first quarter of 2020, altLAB implemented several transformative initiatives:

Welcomed our new Director of Professional Learning and Teaching/Head of altLAB, Associate Professor Benjamin Kehrwald.

Launched the altLAB entity, including: website, promotional material and branded assets.

Strengthened and streamlined our communication processes for greater efficiency.

Moved to a service agreement model to support faculties in achieving their 2020 strategic priorities.

Curated the Academic Practice @ AUT session, hosted by Professor Gayle Morris, Pro Vice Chancellor, Learning and Teaching, as part of AUT's Brilliant Beginnings orientation programme.

Developed and commenced two new required Professional Learning Programmes: AUT Certificate in Teaching and AUT Essentials in Teaching and accompanying resources.

Curated and promoted altLAB 2020 Professional Learning Suite.

Co-led the Virtual Learning Environment Review.

Upgraded and maintained AUT Learning Technologies core toolset, including Blackboard, Mahara and associated help sites.

Collaborated with AUT Library on Academic Integrity Module.

Commenced altLAB Priority Project: Standards Based Assessments for Health and Environmental Sciences Faculty.

Assisted Student Learning Centre to widen the audience scope of Studiosity.

Installed and commissioned Panopto in 90 classrooms, with ICT and suppliers, for lecture capture/livestreaming.

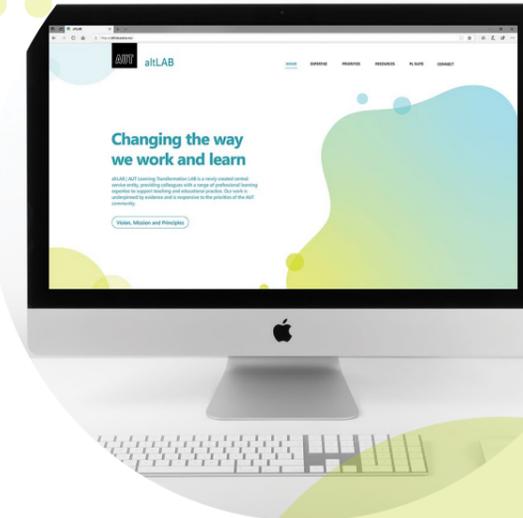
Provided Panopto training and workshops for academic colleagues and ICT colleagues.

Installed a recording booth on the City Campus.

Managed Video Production of: SoTEL Symposium, NZ Scholars, LASER talk, Sustainability Learning & Teaching Symposium, Te Tiriti Based Futures:

Anti-Racism 2020 and Innovation and Entrepreneurship Paper.

Developed Educational Media Projects: Kōrerorero, Interprofessional Learning Zone and AUT Copyright App.



COVID-19 Six Weeks of Service

Between 24 March 2020 & 5 May 2020, altLAB supported academic colleagues, as the University prepared to continue Semester 1, fully online.

Professional Learning Sessions

Top 3 sessions

altLAB initiated a series of

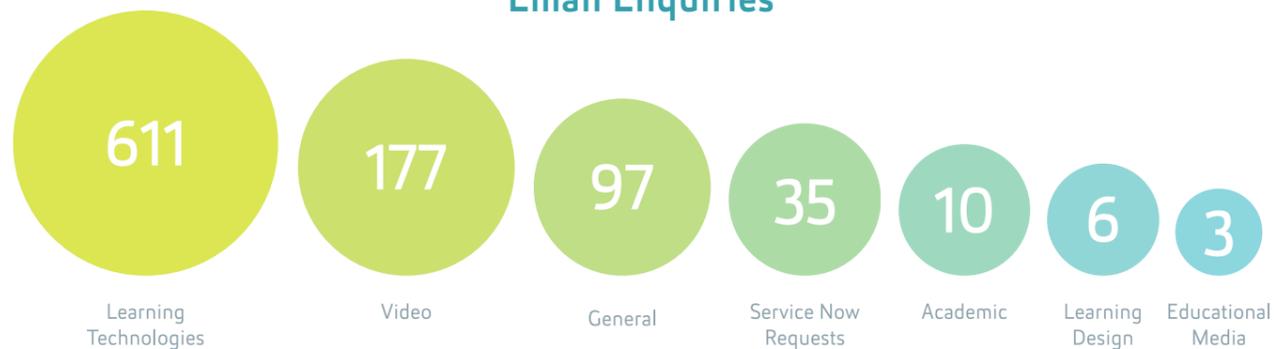


to support academic staff



“ altLAB have been an **invaluable resource to support staff** in the rapid transition to using online learning tools. ”

Email Enquiries



A total of **939** requests!

altLAB Website

Our website experienced

44,107

individual page views with an average of **7,351** per week or **1,050** per day!



6

Major website revisions



4,600

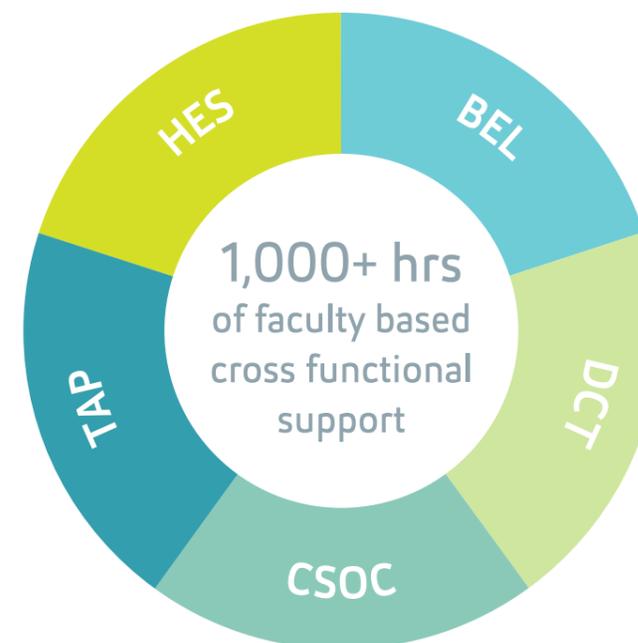
Users visited



8,981

Site sessions

Faculty Support



Common topics:

- Blackboard Collaborate
- Panopto
- Online assessment design
- Online feedback
- Online group work

Our Reputation

As a service entity, we value the feedback of our academic colleagues to help inform how we can best transform learning and teaching.

In the words of our academic colleagues we celebrate our supportive engagement and demonstrate our commitment to helping create engaging learning experiences.

“

Very impressed with Cath (altLAB Learning Designer), in her unwavering ability to deliver her advice, assurance and help with such professionalism, that I immediately found an oasis of calm in a desert of incredible stress and anxiety. That was truly a blessing to have professionals like Cath in AUT, during an incredibly uncertain and panicking time for many of us academics who had no or at best very little experience in delivering material online.”

Dr Nancy McIntyre

School Manager and Lecturer,
Culture & Society

“

What a great support you are. Many thanks for your solutions, endless patience and perseverance. My experience of your contribution to AUT's culture is brilliant and certainly goes a long way in empowering me to do what is best for our students.”

Anonymous

“

altLAB has been my go-to support place for setting up all my online teaching infrastructure and resources – during COVID-19, I've been accessing the wonderful helpful altLAB for online Blackboard Collaborate and Panopto, – Couldn't ask for more! So appreciated!”

Associate Professor

Ann Morrison

Design & Creative
Technologies

“

We were grateful to have such a dedicated team at altLAB to support our academic staff during COVID-19. The altLAB team handled staff requests efficiently, professionally, and approached the individual requests with lots of care and patience.”

Dilani Gedera

Senior Lecturer, Business,
Economics & Law

“

The Human Anatomy & Physiology Team in HEAL609 have experienced altLAB as adaptive, professional and willing to problem solve current and emerging technologies. We have contacted altLAB for the mundane routine matters, unexpected Blackboard issues and for help with ideas to explore implementing. The purpose or problem doesn't matter, because altLAB are onto it, in a positive up-beat timely manner, inspiring confidence and sharing their suggestions for things we could change or improve. They hum along in the foreground and the background on our journey, each semester. We teach and so do they. We learn and so do they. The ultimate collaboration is progress for students. Recently, we invited a small group of altLAB experts to review our paper delivery during COVID-19. We can't wait for further suggestions to help us improve the paper for students. That's ultimately what we are here to do – enable and facilitate student learning, their experience and understanding. With altLAB besides us we reach for the stars.”

Sue Raleigh

Senior Lecturer and Paper Coordinator,
Health & Environmental Sciences

“

altLAB, you have been brilliant. Full stop. You've gone out your way to help us all and educate us in ways we never realised before. You have been innovative, really given time, and shown kindness to us all in keeping with the spirit of the times.”

Professor

Michael G Petterson

Health & Environmental
Sciences

Our Practice: Reflections

In early June, Professor Gayle Morris, Pro Vice Chancellor, Learning and Teaching invited teaching colleagues to contribute feedback on Semester 1 and the transition to teaching in the online learning environment.

Colleagues responded to this call with 169 posts, sharing their perspectives on the positives, the challenges and how we can best assist them, going forward. Here, we share some of the key learnings for altLAB.

Positives

On the **positive** side, some colleagues felt that:

- Communication with students was improved – including through Blackboard to do lists, chatting in Teams or in the chat section of Collaborate.
- Students had better access to lectures without time constraints.
- They had some opportunity to be creative, innovative and rethink some of their practices.

- The huge amount of time needed to make the transition and the difficulties for many – across discipline specific complexities – in designing alternative assessments (for example, in some science disciplines and studio-based subjects).
- Encouraging online peer interaction and class participation and engagement when for many it felt like they were ‘speaking into a void’.
- Working with and across various platforms.

Challenges

Specific to learning and teaching, there were many **challenges** including:

Practice to take forward

Although many are looking forward to returning to face-to-face teaching, there are **online practices** that will continue to be used including:

- Providing students with some flexibility for example, providing some content online.
- Improved communication such as weekly ‘warm up’ videos or checklists, the use of Blackboard Announcements and Teams for ‘office hours’.
- Rethinking some assessments.

- Consider our modes and levels of support.
- Develop clearer communication channels so that colleagues know who is sending information and who they should approach for support with various tasks (eg. altLAB or IT).
- Better surface the evidence-based, contextualised, specialised work that we do with colleagues across the University.

altLAB Learnings

Overall, as we reflect on this feedback, **going forward** we need to:

Please note: This is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis or response to colleagues’ feedback. The focus here is on altLAB specifically. The data as a whole is being considered by others across the University.

Connect with us at
altlab.aut.ac.nz



altLAB | AUT Learning Transformation LAB
Office of the Pro Vice Chancellor Learning & Teaching

JUNE 2020