



## Massey University Risk Appetite Statement

Massey University recognises that achieving its strategic objectives requires active management of uncertainty and risk. The university does not apply a single, uniform approach to risk. Instead, it makes deliberate choices about where it must be highly cautious and where it is willing to take greater risks in order to achieve its mission. Appetite levels are expressed in plain terms (low, medium, high) to ensure clarity and ease of understanding for governance, management, and stakeholders.

Massey University accepts that different levels of risk are appropriate in different contexts. The university has a higher appetite for risks that enable strategic growth, curriculum innovation, and research initiatives, recognising that uncertainty and scrutiny are inherent in world-class teaching and research. A medium appetite is accepted for financial sustainability and reputational exposure, though in the current operating context the University's financial risk appetite is predominantly medium, with growth investments pursued only by exception. Conversely, Massey has a low appetite for risks that may cause harm to people, compromise compliance, integrity, or research ethics, breach privacy, disrupt business-critical operations, or undermine the quality and accreditation of its teaching programmes.

While the University will generally operate within the parameters set by this Statement, it acknowledges that flexibility and adaptability are essential in a complex environment. On occasion, it may be necessary to accept risks outside of these parameters to seize critical opportunities or respond to emerging challenges. Risk appetite will also be expressed at both strategic and operational levels, ensuring governance and management are aligned in their understanding of acceptable risk-taking.

### Appetite levels

- **Low Appetite** – The University seeks to minimise exposure in this area. Risk-taking is generally avoided, except where essential to meet obligations.
- **Medium Appetite** – The University is prepared to accept some risk in pursuit of objectives, provided safeguards are in place.
- **High Appetite** – The University is willing to accept greater uncertainty and risk to achieve significant strategic outcomes.

## Risk Appetite Summary

	Less acceptable to take risks				More acceptable to take risks			
	Accept little or zero risk, taking a cautious approach towards taking risk		A balanced and considered approach is adopted to taking risk		A more assertive or aggressive approach to taking risk is accepted to realise strategic objectives			
	1-5 (Low)		6-15 (Medium)		16-22 (High)		23-25 (Critical)	
Strategic Growth and Innovation					<	>		
Financial			<	>				
Compliance	<	>						
Privacy	<	>						
Health, Safety and Environmental	<	>						
Reputation		<	>		>			
Student Wellbeing	<	>						
Cybersecurity	<	>						
Business Disruption	<	>						
Teaching Quality	<	>						
Programme Accreditation	<	>						
Curriculum Quality & Development			<	>	>			
Research Integrity	<	>						
Research Quality		<	>					
Research Initiatives			<	>	>			

## Risk Appetite by Category

### Strategic Growth and Innovation

The University has a **high appetite** for risks that support new programmes, partnerships, and research initiatives, provided they align with strategic priorities and values. Innovation is encouraged where it strengthens academic reputation and attracts staff and students.

### Financial Risk

Long term financial resilience is currently a key strategic objective for the University. In the current operating context, Massey University is not in a position to invest in growth activities to advantage its strategic position and take a higher risk unless necessary, and by explicit exception. While the risk appetite in this area spans the medium and high-risk categories, the University considers that it has a predominantly **medium** appetite for financial risk at this time.

### Compliance Risk

The University has a **low appetite** for risks that could result in breaches of statutory or regulatory requirements, professional standards, accreditation conditions, research ethics, bribery, or fraud. Compliance with laws such as the Education and Training Act 2020, Crown Entities Act 2004, Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, Employment Relations Act 2000, and Public Finance Act 1989 is paramount.

### Privacy Risk

The University has a **low appetite** for privacy risks. Protecting personal information in line with the Privacy Act 2020 and global standards is essential to maintaining trust and confidence.

### Health, Safety and Wellbeing Risk

The University acknowledges its obligations under the Health & Safety at Work Act 2015, particularly the duties of Officers and the PCBU. Officers will exercise due diligence to ensure the PCBU complies with the Act. The PCBU will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the safety of workers, including staff, students, contractors, and visitors.

The University has a **low** tolerance for occupational health and safety risks, regularly assessing them per the Act. While inherently risky activities may be necessary, a strong culture of safety awareness and risk management is expected from all workers and officers.

### Reputation Risk

While the University has limited tolerance for sustained media attention that could harm its reputation, it actively supports initiatives aligned with its contribution as a world-class teaching and research institution. These initiatives contribute to broader societal objectives, including economic growth, social and community development, and environmental sustainability. Accordingly, the University's risk appetite in this area is considered to be medium.

### Student Wellbeing Risk

The introduction of the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 places obligations on the University to appropriately respond and resource responses to community, cohort, and individual stressors in systematic ways across the whole-of-institution. The University, therefore, considers that it has a **low** appetite in this area.

### Cybersecurity Risk

Massey has a **low** appetite for the loss or breach of high-value information assets due to cyber-attacks and the unavailability of high-value information assets after an attack. The University will take a

balanced approach to cloud risk and has a low to medium risk appetite for cloud adoption to allow the University to meet its strategic objectives. The University considers its risk appetite in this area to be **low** in nature.

### **Business Disruption Risk**

There is a **low** appetite for any business interruptions that may jeopardise the continuity of business-critical activities or that may lead to a loss of confidence by our stakeholders, communities, or key government agencies.

### **Teaching Quality**

The University is operating in a rapidly changing and highly competitive environment. Teaching is our core 'product', therefore high-quality programmes, delivered by excellent teachers, with excellent student outcomes, are fundamental to our reputation and thus our success in the market. The combination of increasing competition, the disruption of traditional teaching and learning approaches by the rise of Generative Artificial Intelligence, and our quality assurance processes means that the University considers that it has a **low** appetite for risk in this area.

### **Programme Accreditation Processes**

The accreditation processes that underpin our professional degree programmes inform how these programmes are structured and delivered. While the requirements of accrediting bodies must be balanced by our expectations of high-quality teaching and learning design, the University is committed to maintaining the accreditation of our professional programmes, and therefore, considers that it has a **low** appetite for risk in this area.

### **Curriculum Quality and Development**

Massey University seeks to provide excellent, contemporary and equitable learning experiences than enable students to engage critically with their discipline in the context of a rapidly changing world. To support this, Massey University is open to exploring innovative curricula and delivery models that respond to evolving student expectations. The University believes its tolerance for risk is higher here and thus considers that it has a **medium to high** appetite for risk in this area.

### **Research Integrity**

Research integrity includes compliance with Human and Animal Ethics regulations, adherence to academic research codes of conduct, responsible international collaboration, and Protective Security Requirements. The University maintains a **low** risk appetite in this area.

### **Research Quality**

High-quality research attracts funding, talent, and students while influencing policy, practice, and academic advancements. While not all research must be groundbreaking, it should be relevant, with funders increasingly requiring explicit justification of its significance. The University's risk appetite for research quality is generally **low to medium**, given its impact on reputation.

### **Research Initiatives**

Research involves uncertainty, with risks varying by type, methodology, and external factors. Some research carries minimal risk (e.g., ecosystem studies), while others are high-risk (e.g., disease marker identification). Timing, social acceptance, and relevance influence potential impact. The University supports a broad research portfolio aligned with its expertise, aiming for academic and societal benefits. It maintains a **medium to high** risk appetite, balancing research excellence with responsible resource use and active management of risk.