

FOSTERING TERTIARY TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Ako Aotearoa's strategic plan



OUR VISION: The best possible
educational outcomes for all learners



OUR *vision*

The best possible educational outcomes for all learners

OUR *mission*

By focusing on enhancing the effectiveness of tertiary teaching and learning practices, Ako Aotearoa will assist educators and organisations to enable the best possible educational outcomes for all learners.

OUR *view on teaching and learning*

Our use of the Māori word 'Ako' reflects our view that teaching and learning are two interactive parts of the whole education experience. Learning should be active and learners have responsibilities as well as rights. Teachers modify and improve their practice by interacting with active learners.

OUR *commitment to te Tiriti o Waitangi*

Ako Aotearoa is committed to becoming a treaty-based organisation, embracing the principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi. We will also work within the context of the Māori Tertiary Education Framework. In particular, Ako Aotearoa will look to develop partnerships with Māori through the establishment of a Māori caucus and a wider Māori reference group. We will support and learn from Māori for Māori initiatives.

OUR *value proposition*

Ako Aotearoa leads the drive to establish what counts as good teaching and learning in Aotearoa-New Zealand and provides the impetus to make it happen, so that teaching is more effective, is better valued and produces the best possible outcomes for learners and the nation.

WORKING ACROSS THE WHOLE SECTOR

Ako Aotearoa will ensure an inclusive approach as we proactively seek to address issues in all tertiary learning contexts. We believe there is much that different parts of the sector can learn from each other.

We will work across the whole tertiary sector, involving universities, institutes

of technology and polytechnics, wānanga, private tertiary education providers, adult and community education and workplaces.

In this way, we will look to add value to organisations where initiatives to support effective teaching and learning outcomes are already underway and work to build capability for similar programmes where they may not yet be available.

To meet our commitments, Ako Aotearoa will build effective relationships with three stakeholder groups:

- organisations (including tertiary education organisations, government agencies, employers and unions)
- educators (including staff engaged in learning support)
- learners.

OUR *strategic overview*

GOALS

Foster and support efforts to enhance learning and teaching
Support research and inquiry into effective teaching and learning
Identify and celebrate excellent teaching practice
Act as a knowledge repository and resource to support effective teaching and learning
Provide policy advice on learning and teaching within the tertiary education sector

STRATEGIC THEMES

Celebrate good teachers and identify and share good practice
Support research and its application
Support and evaluate new ideas
Work across the whole sector with all stakeholders
Raise the level of debate about tertiary teaching and learning
Support and learn from kaupapa Māori
Enhance educational opportunities for Pacific Peoples
Raise expectations for all learners
Develop a sustainable organisation

KEY ACTIONS 2008–2009

Expand the reach, inclusivity and impact of the Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards
Develop a comprehensive web-based resource for tertiary educators
Actively promote and expand the Regional Hubs Project Funding Scheme
Establish a Central Project and Research Fund
Work with our Māori caucus to support and learn from successful Māori models of education
Establish a Pacific Peoples' caucus
Develop activities and events to initiate and support debate on teaching and learning priorities
Establish collaborative links with key stakeholder groups both in New Zealand and overseas, and agree on shared work programmes

HOW WE CAN HELP YOU

At Ako Aotearoa we are guided by our values and principles. These identify who we are and how we work. In all our operations we will:

- focus on learner outcomes
- be evidence-based
- strive for excellence

- collaborate
- be accessible and responsive to diverse interests and perspectives
- look for and foster innovation
- be an independent voice for effective teaching and learning
- draw on international perspectives where appropriate
- take a leadership role.

Ako Aotearoa will work in partnership with those organisations and individuals already involved in researching and promoting good teaching practice and the scholarship of teaching. We will identify and promote effective practice, and will assess ways in which demonstrably successful ideas in one learning context may be applied with equal success in another.

WHAT'S DRIVING THE PLAN

Tertiary education in New Zealand is experiencing significant reform. Its focus is changing from that of increasing access to tertiary education to that of improving the relevance and quality of tertiary teaching. This new focus will require greater collaboration across the whole sector.

Tertiary education is critical to improving the well-being learning and productivity of New Zealand. The number of New Zealanders wanting to take part in it is growing.

Participation in formal tertiary courses and programmes at tertiary institutes has increased ten-fold in the past 40 years. In addition to this:

- the number of New Zealanders opting to take part in workplace learning programmes is rising
- adult and community education is increasingly being recognised as a key component of the tertiary sector.

There are currently about one million New Zealanders taking part in some form of tertiary study. Ako Aotearoa acknowledges the huge diversity among these learners, particularly in their:

- levels of preparation for tertiary study
- preferred learning styles and environments
- motivations and aspirations.

At the same time that learners are becoming more numerous and diverse, the nature of tertiary education is rapidly changing. As we move towards a more skilled and educated society, functional literacy and numeracy issues for all citizens are becoming more critical; cultural and socio-economic factors are impacting on educational success; and rapid changes in technology are changing the ways in which we teach and learn. We must also be cognisant of the international dimensions of education and training both in the currency of our practice and the future needs of learners.

Against this backdrop, educators and learners must ensure that they are able to undertake the role that is expected of them in what is becoming an increasingly complex and diverse environment. We therefore need to focus not just on teaching and learning by itself, but also on the context in which teaching and learning takes place.

Ako Aotearoa's aim is to support New Zealand's organisations and educators to meet these wide-ranging challenges. A key starting point for us is that because of these complexities, there is no single solution to these challenges. There is no one-size-fits-all model of excellence for New Zealand's tertiary sector.

With this in mind our aims are twofold: to ensure that learners enjoy good and worthwhile experiences when they embark on tertiary study, and to nurture and sustain both teaching excellence and excellent teachers.

HOW WE OPERATE

Ako Aotearoa is New Zealand's Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence. Ako Aotearoa's National Office is hosted by Massey University on its Wellington campus. We have three regional hubs:

The Northern Hub, based in Auckland, serves the upper half of the North Island. It is jointly hosted by AUT University and Manukau Institute of Technology.

The Central Hub, based in Palmerston North, serves the lower half of the North Island. It is jointly hosted by Massey University and Universal College of Learning.

The Southern Hub, based in Christchurch, serves the South Island. It is hosted by the University of Canterbury.

