

Valuing te ao Māori, te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in academic writing: guidance for examiners of tauira Māori theses

The University of Otago's Vision 2040 and Māori Strategic Framework along with the Māori Language Policy all encourage and support the integration of te ao Māori (Māori world view), te reo Māori (Māori language) and tikanga Māori (Māori customs) into all aspects of the university. This includes post-graduate research and writing.

Inclusion of tauira Māori (Māori student) identity as Māori in their research and writing is something that should be not only accepted, but valued. That is, tauira Māori have the right to integrate te ao Māori into their writing, even when their work is rooted in Western Science rather than mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge systems). The intention of this document is to ensure examiners are aware of the importance of this inclusion of te ao Māori, understand that choosing to share this knowledge is significant and represents a taonga (treasure) in itself, and respect and value the contribution it makes to the work as a whole.

Māori indigenous ways of writing stem from Māori being a spoken language prior to European arrival in Aotearoa. A Māori author may choose to bring their identity into their research and integrate it in a number of ways, including, but not limited to:

- The inclusion of whakataukī (proverbs) and whakapapa (background) which 'locates the author' within the work.
- A detailed explanation of the meaning and story behind place names.
- Softer language, and greater use of the passive voice rather than the active voice, while keeping the classic structure of an argument.
- The use of cultural concepts and analogy to create structure.

Examiners should note that concepts used in Māori indigenous writing styles often do not have published, peer-reviewed sources to cite, as is usually required to support arguments in Western Science. The inability to reference cultural concepts in a classic scientific way should in no way devalue the inclusion of these concepts. Further, dialects and aphorisms differ among and within iwi; this diversity is also to be embraced.

Although these indigenous ways of writing belong to Māori academics and Māori students, non-Māori are welcome to incorporate principles and insights from te ao Māori to help them write differently and in a way that values and supports te ao Māori.

If you need further guidance and support in examining a thesis written by a tauira Māori, please contact the Associate Dean Māori (Sciences), Dr Tracy Perry, tracy.perry@otago.ac.nz and cc Associate Professor Diane Ruwhiu, Deputy Dean, Graduate Research School, diane.ruwhiu@otago.ac.nz.

Key documents underpinning this guidance are:

University of Otago Vision 2040: www.otago.ac.nz/otago0241079.pdf

University of Otago Māori Strategic Framework: www.otago.ac.nz/maori/otago667421.pdf

University of Otago Māori Language Policy:

<https://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago003239.html>