

Kaiāwhina Whare / Sub Warden (SW) Employment

Frequently Asked Questions

Application

How can I find out more about individual colleges?

Each college has its own website and social media channels where you can find out more about the community, facilities, and what life in the college is like. You are also welcome to visit individual colleges by making an appointment.

This year, colleges will be hosting open days throughout the recruitment period. Open days are a chance to have a look around, meet current staff and Kaiāwhina Whare, ask questions, and get a feel for the college community.

Dates and times for each college's open days will be advertised during the recruitment period, and you are welcome to attend as many as you like.

How do I make an application?

Complete the online application form and submit it by the advertised deadline. Your application will then be shared with the colleges you have indicated you would like to be considered for.

If you are interested in applying for Selwyn College or St Margaret's College, please contact them directly regarding their application process.

Should I provide a written reference with my application?

You are welcome to include written references in support of your application; however, these are entirely optional and are not necessary.

As part of the application process, you will be asked to provide the details of two referees who can be contacted by phone. Ideally, these should be people who have worked with you in a supervisory capacity and can comment on your suitability for the role.

Please make sure your referees are aware that you are applying for a Kaiāwhina Whare position and may be contacted as part of the recruitment process.

What dates do applications open and close?

Applications for Kaiāwhina Whare positions will open on Monday 13 July and close on Sunday 26 July.

Colleges may begin interviewing from the time applications open and will make their initial offers on Friday 14th August. Colleges that still have vacancies after this date will continue their recruitment processes and make offers as required through to early 2027.

Employment Eligibility

Do I need to be enrolled as an Otago student to be a Kaiāwhina Whare?

Yes, Kaiāwhina Whare are expected to be enrolled as full-time students and based in Dunedin for the duration of their employment. In some circumstances, a college leader may consider a part-time student on a case-by-case basis.

Can an international student be a Kaiāwhina Whare?

Yes, provided you have the legal right to work in New Zealand for the duration of your employment. This may include New Zealand citizens, permanent residents, or those holding an appropriate visa.

I'm a second-year student, can I apply?

Yes. There is no specific year of study required. Colleges are looking for people who can demonstrate maturity, good judgement, leadership potential, and the ability to contribute positively to a residential community.

I have never lived in a residential college. Can I still apply?

Absolutely. While living in a residential college can provide useful experience, it is not a requirement. Colleges are interested in a broad range of experiences, including leadership, teamwork, community involvement, event organization, employment, volunteering, and other activities that demonstrate your ability to support and engage with others.

Employment Terms and Conditions

How many hours a week will I work?

Most Kaiāwhina Whare positions involve approximately 38 hours of work per fortnight during term time. There are periods during the year, such as training and resident arrival, where additional hours may be required. There is no guarantee of work during the mid-semester break.

When does the role start and finish?

Kaiāwhina Whare positions begin with training in late January or early February, depending on the college. Most positions conclude at the end of the residential year in November, once the college closes after the final exam period.

Can I work a second job as well as being a KW?

Many Kaiāwhina Whare balance study, employment, and other commitments. However, your studies should remain your priority. If you have another job or are considering taking one on, it's a good idea to discuss this with the college during the recruitment process.

Do I get holidays?

Kaiāwhina Whare receive an additional 8% holiday pay on top of their hourly rate. If you go on leave from your role during the year this will be leave without pay. Work is generally not guaranteed during semester breaks, although some colleges may offer additional work opportunities during these periods.

Am I entitled to sick leave?

Sick leave entitlements begin once you have worked continuously for the college or for the university for six months. If you are unwell and unable to work, please notify your college as soon as possible.

Do I have to stay at the College every night?

No. Unless you are rostered on duty or required for a specific activity, you are free to manage your own time. Kaiāwhina Whare play an important role in the life of the college, and being engaged within the community is an important part of the position.

Some college positions are live-in, while others may be live-out roles.

Will being a Kaiāwhina Whare affect my StudyLink entitlement?

It may. As a paid employee who is paying tax, your earnings could affect your eligibility for a student allowance. As individual circumstances vary, we recommend contacting StudyLink directly for advice specific to your situation.

Training

How much training will I receive?

Training is a significant part of the Kaiāwhina Whare role. Most colleges provide up to three weeks of training before residents arrive, with additional development opportunities offered throughout the year. Training within each college, and between colleges, covers a range of topics designed to help you feel confident and well prepared for the role.

What type of training is offered?

Kaiāwhina Whare are trained in key areas that support the role, including college procedures and administration, responding to challenging situations, pastoral care skills, event management, and supporting residents who may be experiencing distress. Training also includes a strong focus on team building, developing connections and community building.

General

What is the advantage of being a KW?

The KW job has the potential to be the best “internship” you can do while still a student. You will gain experience in teamwork, event management, pastoral care, and time management. You will also be able to positively influence and support first-year and international students as they integrate into Otago.

What if my question is not answered here?

If the question is college-specific, contact that college directly. If your question concerns the application process or other employment matters, please direct them to collegeops@otago.ac.nz

College	Contact	Email address
Arana	Camille Reid	camille.reid@otago.ac.nz
Aquinas	Mike Mataáfa	mike.mataafa@otago.ac.nz
192 Castle College	Abby Spronken	abby.spronken@otago.ac.nz
Caroline Freeman	Eric Nabalagi	eric.nabalagi@otago.ac.nz
Carrington	Chloe Banks	chloe.banks@otago.ac.nz
Cumberland	Luke Morrison	luke.morrison@otago.ac.nz
Hayward	Abby Spronken	abby.spronken@otago.ac.nz
Knox	Alec McWhirter	pastoralandwellbeing@knoxcollege.ac.nz
Selwyn	Brad Watson	deputywarden@selwyn.ac.nz
Studholme	Liza Bergantino-Mitu	liza.bergantinomitu@otago.ac.nz
Te Rangihīroa	Rhys Foster	rhys.foster@otago.ac.nz
Toroa	Stewart Nogueer Blue	stewart.nogueerblue@otago.ac.nz
UniCol	Chris Jacobs	chris.jacobs@otago.ac.nz
UniFlats	Jenna Lockhart	jenna.lockhart@otago.ac.nz
Salmond	Rachel Carson	pastoralandwellbeing@salmondcollege.ac.nz