

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO
ŌTĀKOU WHAKAIHU WAKA

JOB DESCRIPTION

ROLE TITLE:	Pacific Students Transition and Accommodation Adviser
DEPARTMENT:	Pacific Islands Centre
SCHOOL / DIVISION:	Student Services, Academic Division
REPORTS TO:	Manager, Pacific Islands Centre
DIRECT REPORTS (FTE)	Nil
INDIRECT REPORTS (FTE)	Nil

1. PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE ROLE:

The Pacific Students Transition and Accommodation Adviser supports and guides Pacific students as they transition into university life and residential accommodation. The position ensures Pacific students experience a smooth, culturally grounded introduction to the University of Otago, with the goal of increasing retention, achievement, wellbeing, and completion rates.

The role provides coordinated transition support, targeted outreach to colleges and accommodation providers, pastoral and academic pathways guidance, and strong collaboration with internal and external stakeholders.

A key responsibility is strengthening relationships with Colleges, the Pacific Islands Centre, Te Huka Mātauraka, and wider Student Services to ensure early intervention, holistic support, and seamless connection to resources.

2. ACCOUNTABILITIES:

Transition and Orientation Support

- Design, coordinate, and deliver a comprehensive Pacific-first-year orientation programme that prepares students academically, socially, and culturally.
- Provide individualised transition assistance, particularly for first-year students living in residential colleges and flats.
- Ensure students are connected to academic divisions, departments, and key student support services early and effectively.
- Maintain strong relationships with Schools' Liaison and outreach programmes to support the pathway from secondary school to Otago.
- Promote and encourage participation in PIC, Te Huka Mātauraka, and University-wide events that enhance belonging and engagement.
- Contribute to the University's access, participation, and success objectives under Pae Tata by implementing early identification systems for Pacific students at risk during their first semester.
- Develop and implement a structured First 90 Day Transition Framework for Pacific students in residential settings.
- Work with PIC and Colleges to monitor first-year retention and progression data, identifying trends and recommending targeted interventions.
- Strengthen the pipeline from outreach programmes (e.g., KIKS, Pacific on Campus Experience, Hands-On Otago) into successful first-year transition.
- Contribute to institutional retention initiatives by embedding culturally grounded transition practices across colleges.

Accommodation and College Engagement

- Strengthen relationships with College Wardens, sub-wardens, and college support teams to ensure Pacific students receive proactive and culturally responsive care.
- Support students in navigating accommodation processes, including college applications, flatting support, and accessing appropriate living environments.
- Participate in and support college events, cultural activities, and settlement programmes.
- Conduct welfare checks, regular follow-up calls, and early-intervention engagement with students in accommodation settings.
- Assist in resolving accommodation concerns, connecting students to support networks, and breaking down cultural barriers to help-seeking.

Student Support and Pastoral Care

- Serve as the first point of contact for new Pacific students requiring support with university systems (e.g., course approval, Studylink, Blackboard, student email set-up).
- Facilitate access to academic supports including supplementary tutorials, mentoring, and referrals to the Academic Programmes Coordinator.
- Support students to engage with lecturers, advisors, and services by accompanying them when necessary.
- Provide culturally informed pastoral care that enhances wellbeing, confidence, and belonging.
- Champion culturally responsive care models within colleges, embedding Pacific values such as vā, respect, reciprocity, and collective wellbeing.
- Provide cultural capability guidance to college staff to strengthen culturally safe practices.
- Support the development of Pacific student leadership within residential environments.
- Ensure Pacific identity, language, and cultural representation are visible and valued in transition programming.
- Model Pacific leadership consistent with the values and aspirations of the Pacific Strategic Framework.

Programme Development and Event Delivery

- Coordinate events, initiatives, and programmes that strengthen Pacific student engagement with the PIC and Colleges Programme.
- Develop resources, promotional materials, and social media content that reflects Pacific cultural identity and encourages participation.
- Participate in whakatau, cultural events, and celebrations across PIC and Te Huka Mātauraka as appropriate.
- Support early engagement with Pacific families to strengthen transition readiness and shared expectations.
- Participate in outreach events and pre-arrival engagement activities to prepare families and students for residential life.
- Provide culturally appropriate communication to families where needed to support student wellbeing and retention.
- Contribute to strengthening relationships with Pacific communities and key education partners.

Reporting, Data, and Evaluation

- Maintain accurate student contact records and ensure data entry into student databases.
- Provide monthly, semesterly, and annual reporting on student engagement, retention, and programme outcomes.
- Conduct student satisfaction surveys and analyse themes, risk areas, and opportunities for improvement.
- Produce progress reports on Pacific students involved in outreach programmes such as Hands-On Otago, Dare to Succeed, and Pacific on Campus Experience.
- Analyse retention, accommodation engagement, and early academic performance indicators to inform proactive support.

- Contribute to annual PIC reporting aligned with Pae Tata metrics and Pacific Strategic Framework outcomes.
- Develop dashboards or summary reports that track first-year Pacific retention, college engagement, Academic referrals and outcomes
- Transition programme participation
- Lead reflective reviews of transition programmes to ensure scalability and sustainability.
- Identify systemic barriers affecting Pacific students in accommodation environments and recommend structural improvements.

3. KEY RELATIONSHIPS:

Internal:

- Manager, Pacific Islands Centre
- PIC staff
- Te Huka Mātauraka staff
- College Wardens and residential staff
- Student Services teams and the Office of the DVC Pacific
- Academic divisions, Pacific support staff, Kaiāwhina, advisors, and other support services
- OUPISA, OUSA and all Pacific student associations

External:

- Pacific community groups
- Ministry of Social Development (Studylink) and Ministry of Education
- Community support agencies
- Other tertiary Māori and Pacific networks

4. QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE:

- A tertiary degree or relevant professional experience.
- Proven experience coordinating events, programmes, or student support initiatives.
- Experience working with young adults in pastoral, cultural, or educational settings.
- Demonstrated knowledge of Pacific cultures, values, protocols, and diversity.
- Understanding of tikanga Māori and Te Ao Māori as appropriate to the role.
- Ability to respond sensitively to cultural expectations, kawa, and diverse norms.

5. TECHNICAL SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE:

- Excellent interpersonal and relationship-building skills.
- Strong organisational, planning, and time-management capabilities.
- Effective verbal and written communication across cultures and contexts.
- Ability to analyse data, evaluate programmes, and prepare clear reports.
- High level of discretion, professionalism, and confidentiality.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a collaborative team.
- Flexible, adaptable, and calm under pressure.
- Social media and digital literacy.

6. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Ability to travel and hold a full New Zealand driver's licence.
- Ability to work flexible hours during peak periods (orientation, college events, Pacific events).

7. DIRECT BUDGET ACCOUNTABILITY:

- Manage travel and relevant programme expenses within budget guidelines.
- Follow financial procedures for MyPCard and koha/meaalofa approval processes.

8. MĀORI STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

Act in a manner consistent with the principles and implications, as well as the University's commitment to the Treaty as articulated in the Māori Strategic Framework.

9. PACIFIC STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

Act in a manner consistent with the strategies and goals contained in the University's Pacific Strategic Framework, role-modelling and promoting Pacific values, equity and diversity principles and cultural safety practices.

10. HEALTH & SAFETY:

Act and work in a manner compliant with current health and safety at work legislation and University procedures, frameworks and guidelines. Role model safe behaviour and practices, share the responsibility to prevent harm and contribute to a safe campus and work environment, including raising workplace health and safety concerns for self, students, visitors and other staff.

11. SUSTAINABILITY:

Act in a manner consistent with the University's sustainability commitments; role-modelling sustainable practices, with a particular emphasis on minimising the environmental impact of day-to-day activities.