



Equity and Diversity Strategic Framework

Te Rautaki Ararau Tōkeke

Introduction

Kupu Whakataki

Te Whare Wānanga o Ōtāgo is committed to a culture of excellence in equity and diversity that supports all students and staff to achieve to their fullest potential. The Equity and Diversity Strategic Framework articulates this commitment.

The University has long championed equity, and has a proud history of leading social change in support of this. Notable firsts at the University of Otago have included educating Emily Siedeberg, the first female medical graduate in New Zealand (1896), and Sir Peter Buck – Te Rangi Hiroa, the first Māori medical graduate educated in Aotearoa New Zealand (1904).¹

The University sees diversity to be a precondition for, and an indication of, a flourishing intellectual culture. Diversity is a vital component of the freedom of discourse that underpins our institutional role as critic and conscience of society.²

The University's engagement with equity and diversity has broadened over time. Equity and diversity are now seen to comprise multiple attributes of the individual, including age, ethnicity, culture, disability, gender and gender identity, marital status, political opinion, religious belief, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and Māoritanga and Iwitanga, among other things.

The University understands that equity and diversity will continue to evolve as New Zealand society evolves. This progress will entail new challenges to the status quo and will require the University to both accommodate change within its own domain and to lead the way for others. Operating from an evidence base, the University will adapt and respond meaningfully to new equity and diversity circumstances as they arise.

¹ Other examples include New Zealand's first female barrister and solicitor, Ethel Benjamin (graduated 1897), and New Zealand's first Māori Professor of Law, Jacinta Ruru.

² Education Act 1989 [162(4)(v)].



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Context

Te Horopaki

The University of Otago has high-level legal obligations around equity and non-discrimination under the provisions of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, the Human Rights Act 1993, and the Employment Relations Act 2000, among others. The Equity and Diversity Strategic Framework provides an overarching context for a suite of policies and plans³ that express the University's commitment to excellent equity practice in all of its activities.

The University has a Government-mandated responsibility to boost achievement among priority equity groups. The *Tertiary Education Strategy 2014-2019* makes explicit the Government's expectations around this in Priority 3: "Boosting achievement of Māori and Pasifika". In addition to detailing how providers should strengthen their support for Māori and Pacific learners, Priority 3 also exhorts tertiary education providers to support improved achievement by learners from low socio-economic backgrounds, people with disabilities, and refugee and migrant learners; and to support improved participation in certain areas such as women in trades and engineering.⁴ The Government "expects that activity of this kind will continue to be built upon so that all learners experience an inclusive tertiary education system that supports achievement and therefore improves outcomes from study".

The University of Otago has formalised its commitments to Māori and Pacific students and staff in the *Māori Strategic Framework 2016-2022*, the *Pacific Strategic Framework 2013-2020*, and the University of Otago Statement of Objectives [updated annually]. The Equity and Diversity Strategic Framework supports these frameworks

³ Including: the Equity and Diversity Action Plan, The Equity and Diversity Policy, The Equal Employment Opportunity Policy, the Equal Education Opportunity Policy, Affirmative Action Policy, Campus Design for Access and Mobility Policy, Good Employer Policy, Māori Language Policy, Māori Strategic Framework, Pacific Strategic Framework and new policies as they are developed.

⁴ *Tertiary Education Strategy 2014-2019*, p. 12.



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Vision

Te Pae Tawhiti

The University of Otago promotes and upholds equity in its processes and values the individual differences that enrich its community. The University recognises equity and diversity as integral to its strategic goals.

Guiding Principles

Mātāpono Arataki

This commitment is expressed in core values articulated in the *University of Otago Strategic Direction to 2020*:

- Excellence in learning and living environments that enrich the experience of students and staff.
- Knowledge, encompassing its relevance to the needs of students, employers, industry and society.
- Leadership in the development of graduates equipped to shape the future.
- Ethical Standards, encompassing institutional and individual conduct of the highest level; and respecting and valuing others.
- Equity and Social Justice, encompassing equity in employment; equity in educational opportunities; support for full and equal participation and outcomes for all groups in society.

The Equity and Diversity Strategic Framework promotes the University's core values via the following principles:

- The University recognises Māori as tangata whenua and is committed to upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- The University aims to support a safe, supportive, respectful and inclusive environment for all members of its community and recognises its role in cultivating that environment.
- The University's equity and diversity goals are achieved through an Action Plan and associated self-assessment.
- The University values equity and diversity and opposes discrimination on the basis of individual attributes.
- The University will fulfill its legal obligations under all relevant national laws and adhere to UN declarations and conventions on human rights.