



University
of Otago
ŌTĀKOU WHAKAIHU WAKA

Te Rautaki Arara Tōkeke

Equity and Diversity Strategic Framework

Action Plan 2023-2030

Strategic Framework



Introduction | Kupu Whakataki

Te Whare Wānanga o Otāgo | University of Otago, guided by the principle of social accountability, is committed to a culture of excellence in equity, diversity and inclusive practice. We aspire to be a community recognised for our commitment to social justice, in which all students and staff are supported to achieve to their fullest potential in safe and welcoming environments free from discrimination. The Equity and Diversity Strategic Framework articulates this commitment.

The University considers diversity to be a precondition for, and indication of, a flourishing intellectual culture that enables transformative teaching and learning experiences. It is a vital component of the freedom of discourse that underpins our institutional role as critic and conscience of society. Recognising the historical and ongoing marginalisation and discrimination faced by some members of our community, we consider anti-racism and equity action as necessary to realising the benefits of diversity and inclusivity for everybody.

The University's engagement with equity and diversity has broadened over time. Today, equity and diversity encompass multiple, intersecting 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 recognises Māori students and staff as tangata whenua and embraces Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership in all of its activities, including equity action. This is expressed in Otago's Māori Strategic Framework.

The University recognises the special status of Pacific Islands staff and students and expresses this through its promotion of Pacific aspirations. This is expressed in Otago's Pacific Strategic Framework.

Ti Kōuka, the University's sustainability strategic framework, embraces sustainability in its broadest terms, including interrelated aspects of sustainability across social, environmental, and economic domains.

The University understands that equity and diversity will continue to evolve as Aotearoa 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 an expression of the integrated vision, cultural commitments, guiding principles and strategic imperatives established in Vision 2040.

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, the Employment Relations Act 2000, and the Education and Training Act 2020, among others. It has a Government-mandated responsibility to provide barrier-free access to safe, inclusive learning environments within a tertiary education system that works for all learners.

Vision 2040 sets the University's course to be a Te Tiriti o Waitangi led organisation, guided by principles of social accountability, academic freedom, community and partnership. Pae Tata Strategic Plan to 2030 articulates priority areas and actions required to realise this vision. The means to improve education outcomes for priority groups are set out in our Learner Success Plan.

The Equity and Diversity Strategic Framework provides a cross-cutting context for policies and plans that express the University's commitment to excellent equity practice in all of its activities.



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 acknowledges and aims to eliminate structural inequities wherever they exist, recognises equity and diversity as integral to its strategic goals, and seeks to provide an accessible, safe, respectful and welcoming environment in which all students and staff are supported towards achieving their full potential.

Guiding Principles | Mātāpono Arataki

The University expresses its high-level commitment to equity and diversity through the following guiding principles:

- The University recognises Māori as tangata whenua and is committed to meaningful, respectful and enduring partnership in accordance with Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- The University is committed to social accountability and anti-racism, and to identifying and dismantling barriers faced by members of marginalised communities.
- The University aims to support an accessible, safe, respectful and welcoming environment for all members of its community and recognises its role in enabling and co-creating that environment.
- The University values equity and diversity and opposes all forms of discrimination on the basis of individual attributes.
- The University's equity and diversity objectives are achieved through self-assessment, action, reporting and shared accountability at all levels of the organisation, as set out in an Action Plan.
- The University will fulfill its legal obligations under all relevant national laws and adhere to UN declarations and conventions on human rights.

Equity Groups

The University of Otago formalises its commitments to Māori and Pacific Islands staff and students in its Māori Strategic Framework and Pacific Strategic Framework.

The University Equity and Diversity Policy recognises the following equity groups:

- Students and staff with lived experience of disability
- Students who are first in their family to attend university
- LGBTTIQA+ students and staff
- Students from low socio-economic backgrounds
- Students and staff from migrant or refugee backgrounds and those whose first language is not English
- Women where there are barriers to access or success

Definitions

Anti-racism: Individual and organisational action to identify, understand the origins of, respond to, and eliminate racism and the systems and structures that give rise to and perpetuate it.

Equity: Fair treatment, access, participation, opportunity and advancement in every stage of education or career.

Diversity: Recognition of and respect for the differences among individuals and groups.

Equity outcomes: Measurable results of equity strategies, policies, plans, and actions.

Inclusivity: Ensuring equitable access and opportunity and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised.

Inclusive practice: Individual and organisational review, co-development and implementation of procedures and processes to eliminate biases and accommodate difference.

Intersectionality: The ways in which different aspects of identity interact within systems characterised by inequality to create unique combinations of discrimination and privilege.

LGBTTIQA+: Lesbian/gay, bisexual, transgender, takatāpui intersex, questioning and/or queer, asexual, +.

Microaggressions: Commonplace verbal and non-verbal actions that subtly, and often unintentionally, express hostile or negative attitudes toward members of marginalized groups.

Non-disabling: An environment free of the barriers in society that disable people with impairments.

Social justice: The promotion of full and equal participation and access to resources for members of all groups, including co-development of interventions that address past and disrupt ongoing sources and systems of exclusion and discrimination and disadvantage, and that empower people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised.

Students: The University student body includes undergraduate, postgraduate, domestic, international, exchange, distance, visiting, part-time and full-time students.



Action Plan

Three strands of action

The University of Otago's Equity and Diversity vision is clear. We are committed to anti-racism and equity action, and to the co-creation of learning and working environments in which all students and staff are supported towards achieving their full potential. We recognise that forms of inequality are mutually reinforcing, and must therefore be addressed simultaneously.

All members of the University community have a role in creating the culture of equity necessary for realising the University's strategic imperatives. This requires University leaders who are committed to action. The Equity Office and Equity Advisory Committee are committed to working collaboratively with University leaders and stakeholder groups to monitor progress and report annually regarding the Actions and Outcomes of this Plan.

This Plan comprises three interconnected strands of practical action that together promote opportunity, engagement and wellbeing for all while supporting individuals to develop their own knowledge and skills. Aligned with the Equity and Diversity Policy, the three strands require self-examination, monitoring and reporting so that challenges can be identified, solutions can be developed and applied, and progress can be recognised and celebrated.

1. Create Opportunity

The University improves access for diverse and under-represented groups by ensuring that processes are equitable and by fostering safe and welcoming campus culture and environments. To be successful we must grow our equity capability and build knowledge about ourselves and about the barriers faced by members of our community.

2. Grow Capability

The University actively supports staff and students to develop competence and confidence in multicultural contexts and to understand the meaning and importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and biculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand. The University works with staff to develop the knowledge and skills required to uphold equity, diversity and inclusivity in teaching, mentoring and managing diverse students and staff.

3. Build Knowledge

The University identifies and understands barriers faced by members of equity groups within its community so that they may be dismantled. Staff and students are knowledgeable about the benefits and responsibilities of sustaining a culture of equity.

1. Create Opportunity

Benefits

Promoting equity, diversity and inclusive environments and practices enhances our ability to recruit and retain talented staff and students. It allows the University to benefit from the full talent of our staff and empowers students and staff to achieve to their fullest potential. It enhances our ability to uphold our own policies, to meet obligations under the Employment Relations Act 2000, the Education and Training Act 2020 and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Outcomes

- Students from diverse backgrounds feel welcomed, safe and valued as part of the University community and report satisfaction with their university experiences.
- Students and staff from diverse backgrounds are empowered to participate fully in the life of the University, access appropriate support, express their own cultures and identities, and contribute to the development of our unique University culture.
- Systems and structures that lead to exclusion and marginalisation are recognised, addressed and eliminated in all areas of university activity.
- The University of Otago is a non-disabling¹ environment for study and work.
- Students see their diversity reflected in University staff.
- Workplace satisfaction, productivity and engagement are enhanced.
- Staff see their diversity reflected in University leadership and committee membership.
- Ensure that the rights of students and staff with diverse lived experiences of disability are upheld to support their wellbeing, autonomy, access and participation in all areas of University activity, including decision-making and leadership.

Actions

- Review new and update existing policies, procedures, guidelines, and associated processes to ensure alignment with equity-directed policies and guidelines².
- Ensure equity best practices are applied in all university recruiting, review and promotion processes by providing resources and requiring training³ for all staff involved in such processes.
- Identify structural barriers experienced by members of the University community, develop affirmative actions to remove barriers and monitor progress using relevant measures of staff and student satisfaction and demographics data⁴.
- Focus areas to 2030 include:
 - Ensure equity data is accessible and used to inform all aspects of staff and student recruitment and support, in accordance with the University EEO Data Collection Procedure.
 - Initiate an equity and diversity reporting system to ensure Senior Leaders are knowledgeable about equity matters broadly and about equity data in their areas of leadership specifically.
 - Ensure that the rights of students and staff with lived experience of disability are upheld to support

1 As defined in the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016 to 2026.

2 including the Equity and Diversity Policy, Affirmative Action Policy, Ethical Behaviour Policy, Good Employer Policy, and Inclusive Language Guidelines.

3 Provided by staff Learning & Development Programme and the Academic Leadership Development Programme.

their wellbeing, autonomy, access and participation in all areas of University activity, including decision-making and leadership.

- Enact the Kia Ōrite⁵ Code of Practice.
- Coordinate support for Students from Refugee Backgrounds, including English language proficiency and targeted academic support where need is demonstrated.
- Ensure that the unique needs of international students are recognised and understood in order to support their wellbeing, access, autonomy, participation and success.

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<https://www.otago.ac.nz/disabilities/publications/kiaorite/>



2. Grow Capability

Benefits

Supporting university staff and students to understand the systems and sociocultural contexts that affect the experiences of all people in our society underpins social accountability. It enables our staff and students to engage and contribute meaningfully to local, regional, national and global advancement. As we develop our individual and collective capability, we will see the benefits of improved job satisfaction, productivity and engagement. Satisfaction with campus experiences will improve and students from diverse backgrounds will feel safe, welcome and empowered to succeed. The University's academic and operational divisions will be enabled to enact and promote best practices to ensure equitable outcomes.

Outcomes

- The University promotes and upholds equity in all of its processes.
- University staff and students develop the knowledge and skills to engage with diverse individuals and communities.
- University staff are able to recognise barriers that reinforce and contribute to ongoing inequity, and are empowered to find and implement solutions
- Recruitment, progression and professional development practices are affirmative and enabling.
- Ensure that all students have diverse opportunities to develop cultural knowledge and inclusive, culturally safe practice via university-led and student-led initiatives¹, including those specific to their course of study.

Actions

- Empower equity Leadership in all University Divisions
 - The University Manager for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion provides operational equity leadership, support and advice to University leaders.
 - The Equity Advisory Committee initiates and receives annual reports, facilitates communication and provides advice on equity matters in all University Divisions.
 - The OUSA Welfare and Equity Representative provides information and advice to other University leaders on equity matters, including via membership in the Equity Advisory Committee.
- Review and update all job descriptions to ensure responsiveness to the Māori Strategic Framework, Pacific Strategic Framework, Equity and Diversity Strategic Framework, and Tī Kōuka.
- Create and implement a professional development programme in which staff develop the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to recognise and address racism, sexism, microaggression and overt forms of prejudice in safe and constructive ways.
- Ensure that all staff have access to and participate in anti-racism, equity, diversity, and inclusive-practice related learning opportunities¹ alongside and connected with te ao Māori-focused and Pacific-focused professional development.

¹ Opportunities to develop cultural knowledge and inclusive practices are available to permanent, fixed term and hourly employees, via Induction programmes, ALDP, L&D, HEDC, Divisional initiatives, academic papers and external providers.

- Staff development review tools are updated to reflect this expectation.
- Managers and staff work together to set goals and report activity in regular development reviews.
- The objectives and importance of the Māori Strategic Framework, Pacific Strategic Framework, Equity and Diversity Strategic Framework and Tī Kōuka are introduced and discussed during onboarding of new staff, and induction of visiting scholars and external partners. Participants in onboarding and induction processes acknowledge their obligations under these and other University policies and procedures.
- Ensure that students have diverse opportunities to develop cultural knowledge and inclusive practice via university-led and student-led initiatives².
- Facilitate opportunities for students to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to recognise racism, sexism, microaggression and overt forms of prejudice, as to be able to seek support for themselves and their peers.
- Review and update University Equity related websites and pages to reflect current best practice and University equity initiatives.

2 Opportunities include those facilitated by halls of residence, academic Departments, Te Whare Tāwharau, and OUSA.



3. Build Knowledge

Benefits

Achieving our equity and diversity Vision requires the University to be knowledgeable about itself, about the experiences of its staff and students and about progress toward equitable access and outcomes for equity groups, for Māori and for Pacific Islands staff and students. Enabled by this knowledge, the University will be able to design, implement and monitor actions to support staff development.

Outcomes

- University leaders are knowledgeable about staff and student demographics, equity challenges, and strategies for progress.
- University staff are knowledgeable about equity, diversity and inclusive practice and are engaged in upholding the Equity and Diversity Policy and achieving the Outcomes outlined in this Action Plan.
- Students are empowered to engage with University processes, and to advocate for themselves and for others.

Actions

- University Divisions integrate Equity and Diversity into their Strategic Plans, monitor progress, and report on these via
 - Division-wide forums
 - Standardised reporting to Divisional EAC representatives.
- Develop stronger consultation mechanisms through which staff and students with disabilities feel empowered to disclose challenges and find solutions.
- Develop stronger consultation mechanisms through which diverse international students feel empowered to disclose challenges and find solutions.
- Ensure that all staff involved in student and staff recruiting activities have ready access to and use University-reported demographic data for planning and managing processes.
- All internal and academic reviews administered by Quality Advancement require reporting on equity goals, achievements, and practices, including student and staff recruiting, teaching, mentoring and managing staff. Review committees provide feedback, commendations and recommendations on these.
- Internal communication channels are used to raise awareness of equity challenges and opportunities for improvement, to set expectations for and explain the benefits of meeting those challenges, and to celebrate successes.

Monitoring and Accountability

To realise the Outcomes of this plan, the University must be proactive and transparent in gathering, analysing and reporting data that allow us to identify and dismantle barriers, monitor progress, celebrate success, and share accountability. Everybody in the University community has a role in creating a culture of equity.

Leadership

- University leaders¹ participate in equity and diversity planning in their respective areas of responsibility and empower others to enact those plans.
- Leaders of University Divisions report annually to the Equity Advisory Committee (EAC) and to Divisional staff on
 - Equity and Diversity objectives, actions and achievements within Divisional Strategic Plans
 - Student and staff demographic data and trends, including representation, and qualification completion
 - Pay Equity and Pay Gap measures and strategies
 - Equity and diversity themes emerging from staff and student surveys
 - Emerging challenges and strategies to address the using a standard reporting template.
- The EAC monitors progress via Divisional reporting and other communication channels, and reports annually to the Senior Leadership Team on equity challenges, strategies, and progress.
- The University Annual Report includes consistent and comprehensive equity data and analysis across all University Divisions, including students and staff, and all recognised Equity Groups.

Practice

- The Manager for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion provides equity-oriented policy review via membership in the Policy Management Group, and facilitates consultation with the EAC when needed. Equity-oriented policy updates are reported annually.
- All staff report on their participation in equity, diversity, inclusive practice, te ao Māori-focused and Pacific-focused professional development as a regular part of annual and biennial staff development reviews.
- Providers of Development Programmes report annually to the EAC on staff participation in equity, diversity and inclusive practice development activities.
- Performance goals to participate in equity, diversity and inclusive practice development activities are set via annual and biennial development reviews, and participation rates are reported via Divisional equity reporting processes.

¹ Members of the Senior Leadership Team, Directors, Managers, Heads of Departments, Deans, Heads of Programmes, and Associate Deans as appropriate to their roles.

- Access rates for University web pages promoting equity, diversity and inclusive-practice are tracked and reported annually.
- Evidence of best-practice training is required for staff participating in appointment, review and promotion panels. Heads, Managers and Divisional HR Managers work together to uphold this requirement and report annually to the Equity Office.

Data

- The University Strategy, Analytics and Reporting Office, in collaboration with the University Equity Office, reports annually on
 - Staff Equity Demographics
 - Staff Pay Equity and Pay Gaps
 - Student Equity Demographics
- Student Equity Demographics. Student and staff demographic data is presented by Divisional leaders (PVCs, DVCs and Directors) and discussed at Divisional and University-wide forums. Analysis includes staff progression and qualification completion rates.
- Summary Annual Staff and Student Demographics report is published and accessible online.
- Pay Equity and Pay Gap analysis is published annually and accessible online.
- New means are developed to gather information and report on student and staff experiences of classroom and campus equity climate in ways that protect safety and anonymity, including student opinion surveys, staff values surveys and sensitive event disclosures.

Barriers

- University leaders consult with the EAC Divisional representatives and report annually in staff forums on equity barriers and measures taken to reduce them.
 - Members of the EAC provide regular communication to their respective Divisions on best practices and emerging issues.
 - Equity themes arising in staff Exit Interviews are identified and reported to the EAC by Divisional HR managers, as appropriate, via the Equity Office.
 - Equity themes arising from Student Opinion and Graduate Opinion Surveys are identified as a routine part of Quality Advancement survey reporting to Departments, EAC Academic Division representatives and the OUSA EAC representative. PVCs and DVC-A monitor progress and report in appropriate forums.
 - Challenges encountered by staff with impairments are identified, addressed and reported to the EAC by Divisional HR Managers and the EAC Operations Division representative.
- Staff with disabilities report satisfaction with consultation and responsiveness during performance reviews and biennial Staff Values survey.
- Qualification completion rates are equivalent for students across all demographic groups.
- Students and staff reporting positive experiences of campus equity climate increases while number reporting negative experiences declines.