

Skills Active Te Mahi Ako

Disability plan

2024



TE
MAHI
AKO

Introduction

Te Mahi Ako is working towards a future where every person and organisation in te ahumahi ā-rēhia has the opportunity to unlock their potential and gain the skills and knowledge they need to realise the ambitions they have for themselves, their whānau, their customers, and their communities. Our vision is that:

Everyone in our sectors is empowered with the skills to thrive!

Background

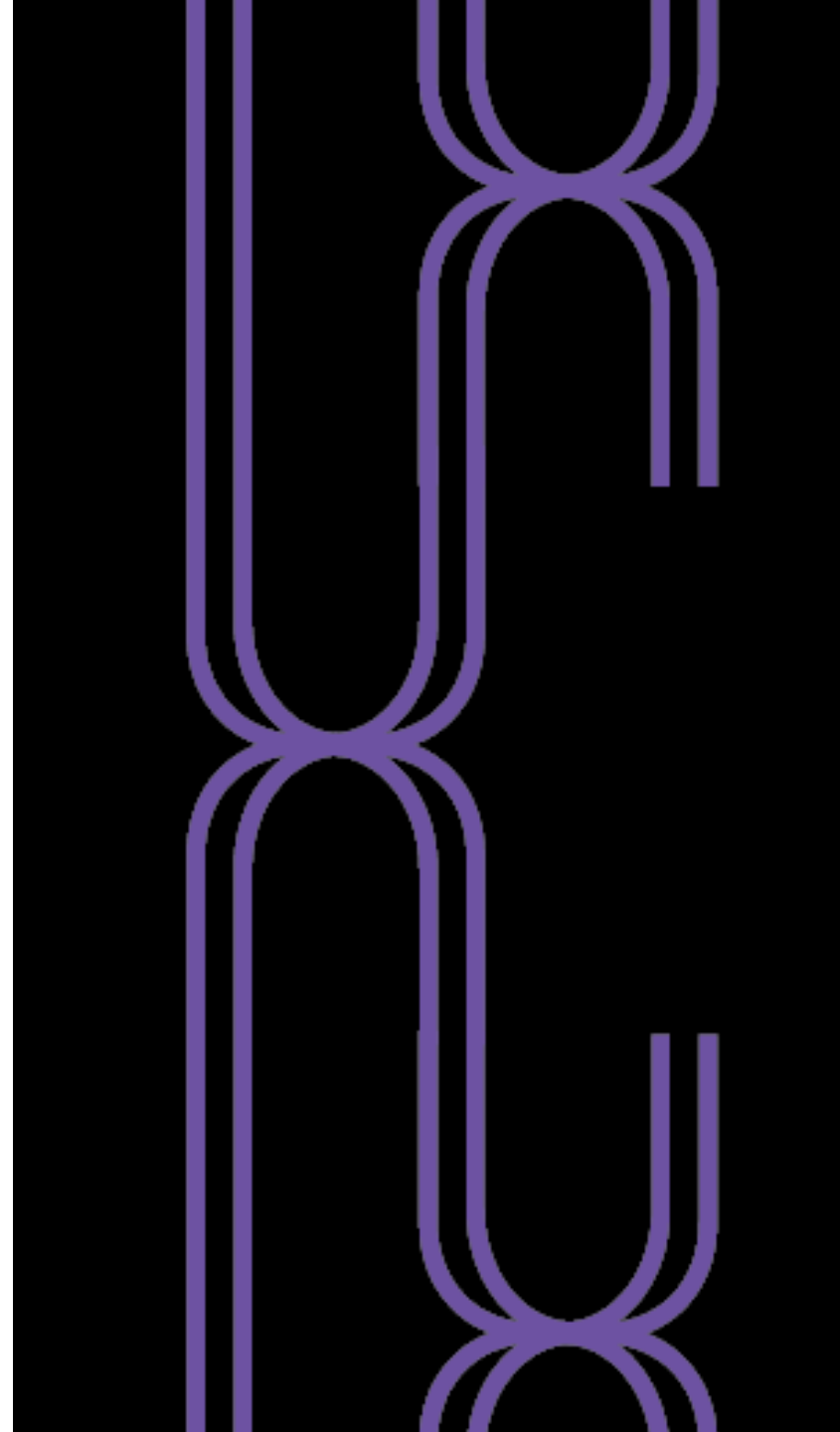
In New Zealand, 24 percent, or more than one million adults identify as having an impairment. People with impairments are disabled if society does not provide an environment that takes their impairments adequately into account. Consequently, they experience barriers that prevent their participation in society*.

Our organisation commits to being inclusive of disabled people and creating equitable outcomes for people to achieve their goals and aspirations as staff, ākonga, and workforce contributors.

Disabled people make up a significant proportion of our community. Disability is a part of the human experience. According to the World Health Report, almost everyone will experience a temporary or permanent disability at some point in life.

As an organisation, Te Mahi Ako is committed to planning to support all learning environments associated with our delivery being inclusive and unlocking the potential of disabled people of all ages.

* www.odi.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources-for-policymakers/ for further information



Defining disability

We refer to the New Zealand Disability Strategy definition of disability that states:
“Disability is something that happens when people with impairments face barriers in society; it is society that disables us, not our impairments, this is the thing all disabled people have in common. It is something that happens when the world we live in has been designed by people who assume that everyone is the same.”*

Our definition is inclusive of, but not limited to the following domains of functioning:

- 1) Seeing, even when wearing glasses or contact lenses
- 2) Hearing, even when using a hearing aid
- 3) Walking, climbing, bending, lifting, grasping
- 4) Learning, concentrating, or remembering
- 5) Self-care (such as washing or dressing)
- 6) Communicating, mixing with others, or socialising.

* www.odi.govt.nz/nz-disability-strategy/about-the-strategy/new-zealand-disability-strategy-2016-2026/the-new-disability-strategy-download-in-a-range-of-accessible-formats/

Action plan intent

While progress is being made by many education organisations to increase access for disabled people, many physical, financial, and attitudinal barriers to accessibility and inclusivity for them and their carers persist. It is important that Te Mahi Ako contributes to making Aotearoa New Zealand a place where disabled people have the same chance as anyone else to participate and succeed in vocational education.

Our Disability Action Plan reflects our response to the Tertiary Education Commission’s (TEC) commitment to improve outcomes for disabled people. It takes into consideration the requirements of the following legislation and guidelines: Human Rights Act 1993; Te Tiriti o Waitangi; New Zealand Government Disability Action Plan 2019-2023; the Education and Training Act 2020; the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2008; the Crown Entities Act 2004; Employment Relations Act 2000, and Government Accessibility Standards (1.1).

The plan is purposely aligned with and informed by the Kia Ōrite Toolkit and the Tertiary Education Commission Disability Action Plan Guidance.

Key principles

As a member of the Achieve Network of Tertiary Education Organisations, Te Mahi Ako acknowledges and supports their 10-point plan for creating inclusive environments for disabled people, both staff and ākonga. This can be summarised by confirming that Te Mahi Ako supports the following principles:

1. All staff are accountable for providing support to disabled people.
2. A system-wide approach to inclusive policies that remove environmental barriers for disabled people is required.
3. Infrastructure for disability confidence, including accessibility procedures and tools for learning and assessment, is facilitated when needed.
4. Support staff will be resourced for implementing inclusive practices with a focus on ākonga-centered solutions.
5. Disabled ākonga will have a voice in the planning, design, and evaluation of programmes through a mandated representation within the academic and stakeholder advisory committee functions.
6. All staff will be provided with training on providing accessible information and support for disabled people with oversight from disabled ākonga representatives.



7. All staff will be provided with training on legal obligations under relevant legislation to ensure a discrimination-free environment.
8. The principles of Universal Design in Education will be implemented in all aspects of the organisation, including education, programme design, assessments, and relevant building accessibility.
9. Continuous evaluation of performance outcomes and the satisfaction of disabled ākongā will be a central tenant of the evaluation strategy.
10. A proactive approach will be taken by planning for diverse impairment needs rather than reacting to individual cases.

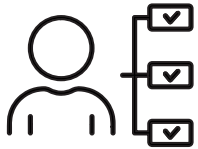
<https://www.odi.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources/an-explanation-of-the-washington-group-short-set-of-questions-on-disability/>
<https://www.achieve.org.nz/kia-orite-toolkit/ten-point-plan/>



Kia Ōrite toolkit

Te Mahi Ako has completed, and over the next year will apply the outcomes of the Kia Ōrite toolkit and self-review. Te Mahi Ako aims to achieve the best practice standards described within the two components.

The summary of outcomes from the review is as follows:



Management responsibility

The review outlined a need for a comprehensive approach to promoting equity and inclusivity in the recruitment, selection, admission, and enrolment processes for disabled learners. It highlights the importance of accessible resources, personalised support plans, and staff training. Ensuring that evaluation extends to the funding and withdrawal process, emphasising clear policies and adequate support provision. Complaints and appeal policies are reviewed for clarity, accessibility, and ākonga support capability. Physical access in buildings and facilities is reviewed and addressed, focusing on compliance with standards and removing physical and digital barriers. The review also stresses the need for strong policy and planning for creating inclusive learning environments. Finally, it underscores the significance of monitoring and evaluation through regular evaluation of learner performance, surveys, feedback integration, and personalised support plans for disabled ākonga.



Learning support

This section focuses on the need for best practices for handling personal information and consolidating recent improvements in the ākonga enrolment process to address barriers throughout the learning journey. The need to emphasise inclusive learning and teaching support, including adopting accessibility standards, awareness campaigns, and consistent staff training. The need to target opportunities for Māori disabled ākonga, addressing marketing, success showcases, and alternative funding streams. Investigating alternative assessment methods and ensuring clear messaging and accessible materials. Promoting opportunities for overcoming barriers for diverse groups of disabled ākonga. The need to enhance learning support through staff training and partnerships with other organisations, including investigating greater access to support services and transitions into employment is identified. Finally, staff development that emphasises inclusive programme evaluation and policy review with a disability lens is to be supported.



The overall goal

The overall goal of the toolkit, and its use, is to provide comprehensive support for our disabled staff and learners throughout their relationship with Te Mahi Ako.

Action plan

The Te Mahi Ako Disability Action Plan covers actions to be taken in 2024 to achieve the vision and principles contained in this document while utilising the tools and approaches endorsed by the sector stakeholders. It replaces the previous plan with a distinct change in approach and alignment. This is based both on the experience of operating as a PTE for 12 months and to align better with the advice provided by TEC on the previous version.

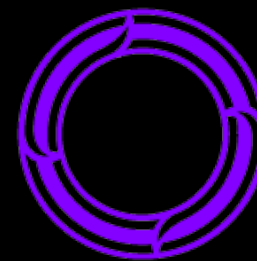
Oversight of the Disability Action Plan and progress tracking will remain with the Disability Action Plan Reference Group (Convened by the manager learner support). This is a working group of the Te Mahi Ako Ākonga Success Committee (Chaired by the general manager engagement), itself a sub-committee of the Te Mahi Ako Academic Committee (Chaired by the general manager education). The Academic Committee reports to the Senior Management Team (Chaired by the CEO).

The Action Plan is a component of the Te Mahi Ako Continuous Improvement Framework. This framework combines the requirements of the NZQA Pastoral Care Code, the Disability Action Plan, the Māori Action Plan, the Pasifika Action Plan, and the current education strategy into one to ensure a cohesive approach to meeting needs.





SKILLS
ACTIVE
AOTEAROA

The logo for Skills Active Aotearoa features a stylized white figure with arms raised, positioned above the text. The text 'SKILLS' and 'ACTIVE' is in a large, bold, serif font, while 'AOTEAROA' is in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font below it.

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