

Gender Equity Strategy and Plan

2026–2029



Waipapa
Taumata Rau
**University
of Auckland**

Gender Equity Strategy and Plan 2026 - 2029

Introduction

This Gender Equity Strategy and Plan presents our vision, strategy and priorities as we work together to create an environment that is more equitable and inclusive. Its implementation will be led by the Human Resources Leadership Team. It was developed partly in response to our Gender Pay Gap reporting, and with reference to [Kia Toipoto](#) – Public Service Pay Gaps Action Plan 2021-24, which is the Public Service Commission’s comprehensive set of actions to help close gender, Māori, Pacific and ethnic pay gaps in the Public Service. It is framed by [Taumata Teitei Vision and Strategic Plan](#) which describes how the University gives effect to its values, te ao Māori principles, and commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It also links to and supports [Kaweia Ake](#) Indigenising initiatives 2024 - 2029 and [Ala o le Moana](#) Pacific strategy 2025 - 2030.

[Kaweia Ake, Indigenising initiatives 2024 – 2029](#), presents a strategy that carries forward the work of indigenising Waipapa Taumata Rau, through Māori leadership, culture and innovation. It is a transformational strategy organised around the six taumata of the enduring framework Toitū Waipapa. The taumata [Waipapa Tāngata Rau](#) presents a set of indigenising initiatives designed to activate the principles of manaakitanga, whanaungatanga and kaitiakitanga with our diverse communities, and contribute to a thriving and valued Māori workforce. This Gender Equity Strategy and Plan has multiple points of contact with the initiatives laid out in Waipapa Tāngata Rau, particularly those relating to Māori staff capability development and Māori leadership development, as well as gender pay reporting for wāhine Māori.

[Ala o le Moana: Pacific Strategy 2025 - 2030](#) is a strategy framed by manumanu ni cagi, frigatebird, as a metaphor for Pacific peoples and their journeys at Waipapa Taumata Rau. It conveys their navigational mastery, soaring ambition, innovation and global impact. Ala o le Moana is organised around five strategic flightpaths designed to amplify the strengths of Pacific students, staff and communities by building an inclusive environment where Pacific peoples thrive. This Gender Equity Strategy and Plan relates strongly to strategic flightpath 3: Enriching Pacific representation, leadership and visibility. The actions and outcomes described by this flightpath include enhancing staff mentoring programmes, strengthening leadership knowledge and skills, and recognising Pacific excellence.

This Gender Equity Strategy and Plan resonates with, supports and amplifies both Kaweia Ake and Ala o le Moana, through shared values and recognition of the intersections between gender and ethnicity. The University’s Gender Pay Gap reporting highlights these intersections, making visible the effects of implicit bias and racism on the work lives of women who are more likely to experience marginalisation on sight.

The focus of this initial Gender Equity Strategy and Plan is on gender and gender-ethnicity intersections. It is consistent with [Te Ara Tautika, the University's Equity Policy](#), which holds the University responsible for addressing structural and systemic ableism, ageism, classism, homophobia, racism, religious intolerance, sexism, transphobia, and other forms of discrimination, especially for groups that have historically been and are disadvantaged or marginalised. It also aligns with the University's [Equity Statement](#), and is a key element of the University's [DEI Strategy and Plan 2025 – 2028](#). These overarching documents provide further context for this, our inaugural Gender Equity Strategy and Plan. Future Gender Pay Gap reporting and subsequent editions of this Strategy and Plan will where possible incorporate gender-disability intersections and gender-Rainbow community membership intersections.

This Strategy and Plan has been developed collaboratively with representatives of key communities and relevant parties. Together, we are working towards a more just and equitable workplace, where people of all genders are recognised and valued, and can thrive.

Principles

The Gender Equity Strategy and Plan is underpinned by the University's te ao Māori principles of:

Manaakitanga, upholding the mana and dignity of others through care, generosity, and the recognition of others as they see themselves

Whanaungatanga, the reciprocal process of maintaining relationships and connections

Kaitiakitanga, guides our commitment to the ethos and practice of sustainability and responsibility in all that we do.

Vision

A university where gender equity is real, visible, and sustained.

Mission

Advance gender equity through an inclusive culture, fair recruitment and progression, accountability and continuous improvement.

Leadership Practices

Achieving our vision will require committed leadership at all levels of the University. [He Iti Kahurangi](#) is a framework that signposts the leadership we aspire to at Waipapa Taumata Rau. It provides four signature leadership practices that guide the design and implementation of this Strategy and Plan, as outlined below.

Mā te mahi ngātahi, ka angitu. We lead together.

Leadership that acknowledges, values, respects and authentically collaborates with communities affected by gender inequities to deliver on our mission.

Waipapa Taumata Rau Herenga waka, Herenga tāngata. We build belonging.

Leadership that understands intersectionality and positionality, actively promotes inclusion, and is respectfully responsive to communities affected by gender inequities.

Mā te huruhuru ka rere te manu. We empower each other.

Leadership that is transparent, accountable, trustworthy, and empowers others by fearlessly sharing gender equity evidence and data.

Whāia te pai tawhiti kia tata, ko te pae tata whakamaua kia tina. We clear the path.

Leadership that is ambitious and innovative while engaged in continuous improvement to reduce gender inequities.

Strategy

The University's strategy for gender equity has four components, which form this plan's four workstreams.

1. Equitable recruitment
2. Equitable remuneration and career progression
3. Wellbeing, culture and capability
4. Evaluation, transparency, and continuous improvement

Each workstream focuses on a particular element of our strategy, and all workstreams have core features in common.

- All workstreams are focused on making things fair, inclusive, accessible, and equitable.
- All workstreams seek to reduce inequities related to gender and gender-ethnicity intersections.
- All workstream leaders are collaboratively supported by the Associate Director Staff DEI and accountable to the Director HR for progressing the deliverables in their workstreams.
- All workstream and deliverable leaders are responsible for aligning their work with the Māori Staffing Plan and the Pacific Staffing Plan.
- All workstream and deliverable leaders are responsible for developing initiatives, milestones, and evaluation processes.

Workstream 1: Equitable recruitment

This workstream is committed to strengthening recruitment practices. It looks at how roles are framed, how candidates and hiring managers engage with recruitment processes, and how decision-making conditions can be improved to reduce the effects of bias. The Talent and Recruitment team and the HR Advisory team are collaboratively responsible for this workstream.

Deliverable	Starting date
1. Job advertisements are standardised to include salary ranges, clearly articulated flexible work options, and a visible commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.	May 2026
2. Interview guidelines aimed to reduce impact of gender and gender-ethnic bias are implemented to promote fair and transparent recruitment practices and create conditions that enable candidates to perform at their best.	May 2026
3. Regular engagement with relevant communities is established to understand candidate experiences and identify barriers within attraction and recruitment processes.	May 2026
4. Frameworks for evaluating salary-on-appointment decisions are investigated and assessed to determine their effectiveness in identifying potential systemic bias related to gender and gender-ethnicity intersections.	May 2026

Workstream 2: Equitable remuneration and career progression

This workstream is committed to strengthening remuneration and career progression systems for all staff. It clarifies the rules and expectations around remuneration and progression and strengthens decision-making conditions to minimise the effects of bias. The HR Advisory and Talent and Recruitment teams are collaboratively responsible for this workstream.

Deliverable	Starting date
5. Transparent, bias-mitigated processes for academic salary reviews at PTF4, Associate Professor and Professor levels are established, with specific attention to gender and gender-ethnicity intersections.	May 2026
6. Ways to recognise leadership, cultural work and unpaid contributions are developed, with attention to how gender and gender-ethnicity intersections shape the visibility and valuing of this work.	May 2026
7. Annual reviews of TUPU outcomes are established to identify and address structural biases, and to support equitable recognition of staff achievements across genders and gender-ethnicity intersections.	May 2026
8. Prompts are introduced to performance and professional development review processes to encourage managers to reflect on gender and gender-ethnicity equity considerations, including systemic barriers, flexible work arrangements, and diverse forms of contribution.	May 2026
9. The use of ARTO in reward and recognition processes is promoted as a tool for recognising the achievements of all staff.	May 2026
10. Publish clear promotion, progression, and development pathways for academic staff, including transparent criteria and available support options.	November 2027
11. The use of performance payments, allowances, and other discretionary benefits is looked at to evaluate the equity of their distribution.	November 2027
12. Structured guidance and support are provided for staff returning from parental leave	November 2027
13. Clear guidelines and processes are implemented to minimise the effects of biases when designing roles and writing position descriptions.	November 2027

Workstream 3: Wellbeing, Culture and Capability

This workstream is committed to strengthening gender-inclusive capability across the University. It focuses on creating conditions where considerations of gender and gender-ethnicity intersections are embedded in how we approach wellbeing and flexibility, ensuring support for gender-inclusion in practice. The Organisational Development, HR Advisory, and Health, Safety and Wellbeing teams are collaboratively responsible for this workstream.

Deliverable	Starting date
14. Implicit Bias, Cultural Navigation and DEI Literacy programmes are available for all decision makers, including hiring managers at all levels at the university.	May 2026
15. The development of the Wellbeing Strategy includes provisions that reflect gender needs and realities, as well as their intersections with ethnicity.	May 2026
16. Decision-makers have access to data and context needed to make fair and equitable performance assessments, with attention to gender and gender-ethnicity intersections.	November 2027
17. Staff leadership development is supported through programmes, mentoring, and career progression initiatives targeted on the basis of gender and gender-ethnicity intersections.	November 2027
18. Structured career conversations are initiated by managers to support staff whose progression may be affected by gender or gender-ethnicity intersections, including those returning from career breaks or navigating additional barriers.	November 2027
19. Collaboration with key decision-makers is strengthened to progress practical wellbeing and equity resources — including physical spaces with associated educational resources and awareness initiatives — to support the diverse needs of staff.	November 2027
20. Staff-led initiatives that embed inclusive everyday workplace practices are supported and promoted, enhancing wellbeing and belonging through an intersectional approach that recognises the interplay of gender and ethnicity.	November 2027
21. The Work, Life, Family and Carers Policy reflects the diverse experiences of our communities.	November 2027

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| 22. The Flexible Work policy is aligned with the Wellbeing Strategy, supporting equitable access to flexibility across all genders and gender-ethnicity intersections, and reinforcing flexibility as a core component of wellbeing. | November 2027 |
| 23. Job design is aligned with the Flexible Work Policy and Wellbeing Strategy so that flexibility is available, encouraged, and supported as a standard part of healthy job design. | November 2027 |
| 24. Stories of successful flexible work are shared to highlight healthy, sustainable ways of working and to showcase how flexibility supports success across genders, and across gender-ethnicity intersections. | November 2027 |
| 25. Gender and gender-ethnicity intersections are incorporated in the annual Health, Safety and Wellbeing Conference to support inclusive participation and dialogue on emerging wellbeing issues, including health inequities. | November 2027 |

Workstream 4: Evaluation, transparency, and continuous improvement

This workstream is committed to evaluating and transparently reporting on organisational performance and the workplace experience, with a focus on gender and gender-ethnicity equity, in a cycle of continuous improvement. The Director of HR and HR Services are collaboratively responsible for this workstream.

- | Deliverable | Starting date |
|--|---------------|
| 26. A Gender Equity Strategy and Plan for 2026 – 2029 is published. | May 2026 |
| 27. A Gender Pay Gap Report is published annually, including analyses by gender-ethnicity intersections and where possible by gender-disability intersections and by gender-Rainbow community membership intersections, as well as drivers and progress toward closing gaps. | May 2026 |
| 28. Academic promotion outcomes, disaggregated by gender and gender-ethnicity intersections, with analysis of trends and equity gaps, are published annually. | May 2026 |
| 29. Staff communities and stakeholders are engaged in regular reviews of actions to reduce gender and ethnic gender pay gaps, identifying opportunities for continuous improvement | November 2027 |

Evaluation

Workstream leaders are responsible for monitoring the timely achievement of specific milestones and outcomes, and evaluating the effectiveness of initiatives, as part of their project management activities. Specific evaluation methods and measures will be established as part of the development of each initiative, including the transition to business as usual and ongoing reporting where appropriate.

The overall effectiveness of our Strategy and Plan will be evaluated by synthesising information from several different sources. HR and the OPVCE will report annually against this Strategy and Plan by summarising:

- Annual Gender Pay Gap Reports
- Staff data disaggregated by gender and gender-ethnicity intersections
- Annual reporting of academic promotion round data and TUPU data disaggregated by gender and gender-ethnicity intersections
- Engagement with staff communities and relevant parties in reviews of actions to address sources of gender and gender-ethnic pay gaps and disparities in workplace experiences

Annual reports will be presented to the following groups for discussion and feedback:

- Relevant registered staff networks
- Gender Equity Strategy and Plan Reference Group
- Equity Action Network
- University Equity Leadership Committee

Glossary

Disability

Waipapa Taumata Rau defines disability as any physical, psychological, cognitive, or sensory impairment which, in interaction with social and systemic barriers, restricts a person's full and effective participation in university life on an equal basis with others.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is defined by Tatauranga Aotearoa | Stats NZ as a measure of cultural affiliation. It is not a measure of race, ancestry, nationality, or citizenship. Ethnicity is self-perceived and people can belong to more than one ethnic group. An ethnic group is made up of people who have some or all the following characteristics:

- A common proper name
- One or more elements of common culture, for example religion, customs, or language
- Unique community of interests, feelings, and actions
- A shared sense of common origins or ancestry
- A common geographic origin

Each staff member can select one or more ethnicities in the University's secure identity system. The system then groups people according to the ethnicity categories provided by Tatauranga Aotearoa | Stats NZ. Staff who select more than one ethnicity are included in all the ethnic groups they select.

Ethnic groups^[1]

Gender pay gaps are calculated for women who:

- Are Māori
- Belong to the Pacific group of ethnicities
- Belong to the Asian group of ethnicities
- Belong to Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African groups of ethnicities.
- Belong to the Pākehā and European group of ethnicities.

The analyses of ethnicity gender pay gaps are unable to include staff who selected "other" ethnicity or provided no response to the ethnicity question.

Equity^[2]

Equity refers to the principles of fairness, justice, and impartiality. Unlike equality, which emphasises treating everyone the same, equity recognises that people have different needs and challenges. Therefore, it involves providing resources and opportunities in ways that

level the playing field for each person, especially those from historically disadvantaged or underrepresented groups. The goal of equity is to ensure that each person has the necessary tools and support to succeed, based on their circumstances and needs.

Gender

All employees can identify their gender in their employee record. The options are female, male, or gender diverse. The number of people indicating they are gender diverse is relatively small. This prevents a meaningful pay gap analysis for this group at this time.

Gender equity^[3]

Gender equity refers to the process of recognising and addressing the specific needs, barriers, and circumstances experienced by different genders, and taking proactive steps to ensure fair treatment, access, and opportunities. Unlike gender equality, which focuses on providing the same resources and opportunities to all, gender equity acknowledges historical and systemic disadvantages and seeks to correct them through tailored actions and policies.

Gender-ethnicity intersections

Refers to the ways in which gender and ethnicity interact to produce distinct and often compounded experiences of advantage or disadvantage, particularly in relation to pay, progression, recognition, and workplace conditions.

Gender Pay Gap

Gender Pay Gaps are broad indicators of gender equity in workplace culture and conditions and are based on the differences in median hourly pay rates between genders in an organisation. An organisation can have equal pay, and pay equity, and still have a Gender Pay Gap.

Implicit bias

Refers to automatic, unintentional judgments and assumptions shaped by background, culture, and experience, which can influence decisions and behaviour even when individuals aim to be fair and objective. Recognising and understanding the various implicit biases we all have enables us to make more equitable choices.

Intersectionality^[4]

Refers to the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping and compounding forms of discrimination and marginalisation. Examples of aspects of a person's identity that can often intersect are their gender identity, ethnicity, disability, religious faith, and sexuality.

Pay Equity

If pay is equitable it means that people of all genders are paid the same for work that is different but of equal value.

Race^[5]

Is a socially constructed system that categorises groups of people based on their shared identity connected to colour, or to racial, national, or ethnic origins.

Racism^[6]

Aotearoa New Zealand has no agreed definition of racism. The Human Rights Commission describes racism as “any individual action, or institutional practice backed by institutional power, which subordinates or negatively affects people because of their ethnicity.” This means racism broadly encompasses all forms of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, nationality, culture and religion.

There are many forms of racism. It can be hidden or obvious, conscious or unconscious. It occurs within people, between people, and across organisations and society.

Systemic and structural bias^[7]

Biased systemic structures refer to the institutionalised patterns, policies, and practices that inherently favour certain groups while disadvantaging others based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or disability.

^[1] [University Demographic Data – ethnicity data](#)

^[2] [Oxford Review DEI dictionary](#)

^[3] <https://oxford-review.com/the-oxford-review-dei-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-dictionary/gender-equity-definition-and-explanation/>

^[4] [Words Matter DEI high use terms](#)

^[5] NZ Law Dictionary definition and [e-Tangata.co.nz/how we talk about race](http://e-Tangata.co.nz/how-we-talk-about-race). A further interpretation is here in the National Human Genome Research Institute <https://www.genome.gov/genetics-glossary/Race>

^[6] [NZ National Action Plan against Racism](#)

^[7] <https://oxford-review.com/the-oxford-review-dei-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-dictionary/biased-systemic-structures-definition-and-explanation/>

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