Ako Aotearoa Northern Regional Forum

8 May 2025 | Auckland

Cultivating Thought Leadership and Excellence in Teaching | Shaping the Future of Education

He Whakatipu Hautūtanga Whakaaro me te Akoako Kounga | Hei Hanga i Te Anamata o te Mātauranga

Ako AOTEAROA | National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence

Programme

Note: This programme is subject to change

Time	Action
9.00	Mihi whakatau, Ngāti Whatua
9.15	**Welcome/overview**, James Oldfield
9.25	**A vision for future priority learners**, Phil Alexander-Crawford
10.00	Kōrerorero / Discussion Session One, Facilitation of sector collaboration in tertiary education
10.45	Morning Tea
11.05	**Driving innovation with what you've got!** Associate Professor Tracy Bowell and Michelle Jordan-Tong
11.30	Kōrerorero / Discussion Session Two, Leadership, Promotion and Celebration of Tertiary Teaching Excellence
12.10	**Pacific Panel: Fostering critical thinking** Vaivaimalemālō Fred Luatua, Jone Tawaketini, Kamuka Pati, chaired by Phil Alexander-Crawford
12.40	Lunch
1.30	**Staying current with educational trends,** Linda Keesing-Styles, Jane Terrell
2.00	**AI Panel: What will your future students look like?** David Parsons, Nasser Giacaman, Piata Allen, Irene Lubbe, Alan Kan, led by Professor Paul Denny
2.45	Afternoon Tea
3.00	**Becoming intentionally fallible,** Cody Mankelow
3.30	Poroporoaki, James Oldfield

Northern Regional Forum presenters

A vision for future priority learners

Presenters: Phil Alexander-Crawford

Phil Alexander-Crawford is an experienced transformation and transition manager with an investment for impact focus. He has a history of thought leadership in the higher education world using an akonga centered Kaupapa to improve outcomes for hapori, Iwi, hapu and whanau. In addition he has experience in engagement and solution based codesign across multiple stakeholders and Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners. With strong communication skills honed from practicing law, lecturing, extensive governance/management roles and facilitation, and education background with bachelor degrees in law and business, as well as a Master's Degree focused on State Education Policy and Māori, Phil brings value to any conference.

Driving innovation with what you've got

Presenters: Associate Professor Tracy Bowell and Michelle Jordan-Tong

Fostering critical thinking

Presenters: Vaivaimalemālō Fred Luatua, Jone Tawaketini, Kamuka Pati, chaired by Phil Alexander-Crawford

Vaivaimalemālō Fred Luatua, from the villages of Sālepoua'e Sāle'imoa, Lalomālava (Samoa), Otara and Māngere (Tāmaki Makaurau).

Fred has been part of the workforce development sector for more than 20 years. During that time, he has worked with industry, local and central government on innovative strategies to support a resilient workforce. More recently he has been working in the economic development sector. Fred's experience in working with business and industry included addressing workforce pain points and optimising opportunities, striving towards a skilled and resilient workforce. His background also includes project management, programme and career development, including working across the compulsory and tertiary sectors and with Pasifika and Māori communities.

Fred is also a Chiefs rugby fan. Go the mighty Chiefs!

Jone Tawaketini's story began in the village of Keteira in Moala Island, Fiji. He also has Tongan heritage (Ha'apai) on his father's side of the family.

Jone teaches in Unitec's Bachelor of Applied Technology programme. Since joining Unitec, he has gained a Master in Educational Leadership and Management, with his thesis topic based on The cultural influences on retention of Pasifika students. He has done further research, based on the initiatives he established to contribute to Pacific students' success and retention, and presented at various Pacific symposiums. He attends meetings and sits on boards to ensure that Pacific students and communities are represented and considered in decision-making and represents Pacific staff in the Tertiary Education Union (Unitec Branch). He also supports the Unitec Pacific Centre's initiatives to enhance Pacific capability.

Kamuka Pati is described as, "the new generation vocational teacher and emerging academic" driven by the question, "what can we do better?" He is also highly innovative as exemplified by his creation of the 'Smart Shed' – a high tech classroom utilising a range of technology including smart phones and quick codes to make learning relevant for his learners. Kamuka's contribution has extended beyond the classroom and into the Pacific where he taught Samoan locals to build their own houses after the 2009 tsunami. He is mindful of the need to continually evolve as a teacher and retain an enthusiasm for what he does. "Just as important as learners staying engaged is that as teachers we also need to stay engaged…the mindset of continuously wanting to do better has kept me fresh."

Staying current with educational trends
Presenters: Linda Keesing-Styles, Jane Terrell

Linda Keesing-Styles is an experienced consultant with a demonstrated history of working in the tertiary education sector with a particular focus on contemporary learning and teaching. She is skilled in the strategic development of curriculum and the components of engaging learning and teaching (including web-based, work-based and innovative class-based pedagogies. She has a strong history of developing and implementing targeted and successful professional development strategies and processes. Her doctorate was focused in Higher Education with a focus on excellence in teaching and embedded social justice education.

Jane Terrell is an independent educational facilitator with experience in a wide range of tertiary education and industry contexts.

She is dedicated to ensuring educational success for under-prepared ākonga groups underpinned by her commitment to "ako", teaching and learning as a reciprocal process.

What will your future students look like?
Presenters: David Parsons, Nasser Giacaman, Piata Allen, Irene Lubbe, Alan Kan, led by Professor Paul Denny

Paul Denny is a Professor in the School of Computer Science at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, and currently serving as Assistant Dean Academic in the Faculty of Science. His research interests include developing and evaluating tools for supporting collaborative learning, improving outcomes for novice programmers, exploring the ways that students engage with online learning environments, and investigating how generative AI is impacting how and what is taught in computing classrooms. He has led several recent initiatives on this latter topic, including an ITiCSE 2023 Working Group exploring the impact of generative AI on computing education, workshops at SIGCSE 2023 and 2024 on using large language models for teaching computing, the "Generative AI for Education" (GAIED) workshop at NeurIPS 2023, and the upcoming Dagstuhl seminar (July 2025) on Generative AI in Programming Education. Paul is immediate past Chair of the Australasian ACM SIGCSE Chapter, was Program Co-Chair for ICER 2024, and has been recognized for contributions to teaching both nationally and internationally, receiving New Zealand's National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Award, the Computing Research and Education Association of Australasia Award for Outstanding Contributions to Teaching, and the QS Reimagine Education Overall Award (2018).

Dr David Parsons is Research Director at academyEX, supporting staff and student research across a range of programmes. He is also an Adjunct Professor in the School of Educational Studies and Leadership at the University of Canterbury and a subject matter expert for the Open Polytechnic. He holds a PhD in Information Technology and has had a broad and varied experience as a teacher, academic, industry practitioner, and researcher, with a particular interest in the role of ICT in education. Prior to joining The Mind Lab (now academyEX) in 2015, he was Associate Professor of Information Technology at Massey University, Albany, and previously worked in both academia and industry in the UK, including a Senior Lectureship at Southampton Solent University and technology training roles for IBM and Oracle. He is the founding Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning and has published widely in software development and technology-enhanced learning. He is a Certified Member of the Association for Learning Technologies and past president of the International Association for Mobile Learning. He has a keen interest in the role of AI in education and is a co-author of the scaffolded AI literacy (SAIL) framework.

Nasser Giacaman's research interests focus on developing pedagogically-sound software solutions for educational contexts, known as Digital Educational Engineering. Target domains include both software engineering education (with the development of tools and apps to help students learn difficult programming concepts), as well as teaching and research collaborations in other educational areas.

Dr Piata Allen is a Māori-medium graduate, teacher and parent whose PhD research focused on rebalancing mātauranga and school mathematics curriculum content. Piata also designs and delivers online learning programmes for te reo Māori (Māori language), Hangarau Matihiko (Digital Technologies) and Pāngarau (Mathematics). The focus of her work recently has been establishing a Mātauranga Pathways Community of Interest and leading Whakapikihia ngā Taumata o te Reo Kairangi ki Waipapa, a Tertiary Education Commission-funded project aimed at increasing the number of ākonga exiting Waipapa Taumata Rau with high-level te reo Māori proficiency.

Irene Lubbe. With over 23 years of global experience in higher education across Africa, Europe, and Aotearoa New Zealand, I specialise in curriculum transformation, assessment strategy, and faculty development. My work empowers educators to teach, assess, and support students more effectively – using inclusive, evidence-informed, and technology-enhanced practices.

From leading curriculum reforms in health sciences, to training academics in pedagogical innovation, I bring both strategic vision and hands-on experience. I'm passionate about meaningful change in education and building supportive learning environments where students and staff can thrive.

Currently Director of Assessment at the University of Auckland's Medical Programme Directorate, I remain actively engaged in research, academic leadership, and collaborative innovation that places people, purpose, and progress at the centre of learning.

Alan Kan co-founded Mission Ready HQ to help address New Zealand's IT skills gap via bringing and training new talents into the industry. They are also on a mission to help people in financial hardship to stand on their own feet by training them up for suitable tech jobs Alan's passion for technology started at a young age when he wrote his first line of code when he was eight years old. By the age of 11, he programmed his first game. Since then he has been delivering outcome (and fun) via tech innovations and helping others to do the same.

Having two decades of successful tech innovation career from IBM and an adjunct professorship at Unitec, Alan experienced first-hand both the tech skills shortage, and the challenges for students to join

the tech industry. He reinvented himself as an EdTech entrepreneur to pursue his passion of closing the tech skill gaps in New Zealand. He designed training programmes that transform anyone into tech professionals in just 20 weeks with an 80% employment rate. It has changed the lives of many people and their families by giving them stable careers and respectable income.

An international speaker on business innovation and emerging technology topics, Alan will be sharing his insights and predictions on how AI and ChatGPT will impact industries, and how you can leverage it to achieve outcome.

Becoming intentionally fallible
Presenter: Cody Mankelow

Cody Mankelow is the director of the MCivilEng Programme. He has academic experience in the Humanities, Science and Engineering. He transitioned from Science to Engineering in postgrad, completing his PhD in Environmental Engineering in 2019. Cody is a professional teaching fellow in the Civil and Environmental Engineering department, whose teaching focuses on the intersection of Engineering, Communities, Sustainability and Well-being.

Cody identifies as a person with disabilities (ADHD and Dyslexia) and is passionate about inclusive teaching.

Pūtahi Mātauranga | Knowledge Centre

Our website-based Knowledge Centre has over 1500 free resources available to those working in tertiary education, vocational and workplace training. This wide range of free practical resources support staff to build teaching and learning practice to benefit learners.

The outputs are developed from our research projects and other initiatives. We encourage people to download them from **ako.ac.nz/knowledge-centre** and share widely.

Our Manako programme

Ako Aotearoa's Manako team focuses on building educator capability to enhance cultural capability and Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) success for all learners. 'Manako' means "aspiration" and "hope" in te ao Māori.

Some key components to the Manako programme include the Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark and the Tapatoru | Ako Professional Practice Award. The programme also involves high-quality professional learning and development courses and workshops, online webinars, educator pathways hosted on Pathways Awarua, plus leading work on learner agency digital literacy and neurodiversity.

Huihuinga Tāngata | Strategic forums and sector events

We are proud to run strategic events in priority areas of tertiary education in Aotearoa. These events include the Regional Forums hosted by our Northern, Central and Southern Hubs, and Tuia Te Ako (our national Māori tertiary education hui). We also collaborate, sponsor and contribute to a range of sector events organised by other groups.

Te Pātaka Mātauranga Māori | Storehouse of Māori Knowledge

Since June 2022, our Pātaka or storehouse has been making it easier for visitors to our website to find content relating to Mātauranga Maori, Kaupapa Maori, success for Maori learners and building cultural capability. Visit **ako.ac.nz/te-pataka-matauranga-maori** and explore the Pātaka's four kete:

Te Kete Rauemi Mātauranga
Kete of Māori Resources

Te Kete Āheitanga Ahurea Māori
Māori Cultural Capability Kete

Te Kete Whakaputanga-Tiriti
Declaration-Treaty Kete

Te Kete Huihuinga Tāngata
Kete of Events

Communities of Practice

We facilitate two online communities of practice (CoP): our Manako CoP is for educators in the adult language, literacy and numeracy space. You are welcome to join at **facebook.com/groups/alnacc** and participate in the discussions. Our Neurodiversity CoP is for anyone with expertise or interest in neurodiversity. Contact Graeme at **Graeme.Read@ako.ac.nz** if you'd like to join. We are pleased to support the development of other CoPs in the tertiary sector, whether it be within an organisation or across institutions.

Find us on:

facebook.com/AkoAotearoa   linkedin.com/company/ako-aotearoa   instagram.com/akoaotearoa

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Connect with us

Ruth Peterson
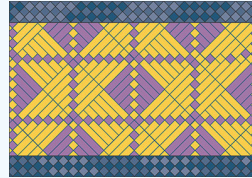Sector Services Manager
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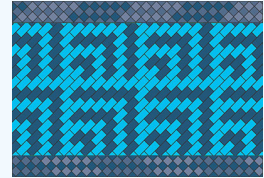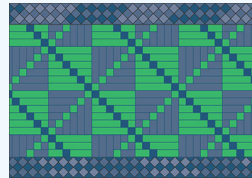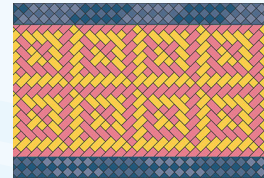
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Ruth provides leadership covering the territory from Taumarunui and Hick's Bay to Cape Reinga, the most densely populated part of the country, with the greatest number of tertiary organisations. She assists the growth of culturally capable educators, working in collaboration with many people throughout the northern region, with whom she has formed valuable relationships over the past fourteen years.

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