

# Cultivating cultural understanding and inclusivity in tertiary education and training by building Māori cultural capability

## Introduction

Māori cultural capability is a significant part of the Manako programme provided by Ako Aotearoa, the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence. The [Manako programme](#), formerly known as the Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Cultural Capability (ALNACC) programme, continues our partnership with the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) to enhance tertiary educator capability in Aotearoa New Zealand. Embracing our roots and expertise in literacy, numeracy, and both Māori and Pacific cultural capability, Manako expands our commitment to delivering inclusive and effective education, informed by the values and needs of all New Zealanders.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, embedding Māori cultural capability into tertiary education is essential to fostering an inclusive, culturally aware learning and teaching environment. The Tertiary Education Commission's Manako contract highlights this need by focusing not only on Language, Literacy, and Numeracy but on Cultural Capability.

This briefing paper examines the '[Building Māori Cultural Capability](#)' programme which is central to enhancing teaching quality and Māori learner outcomes. It advocates for bolstering the programme through increased funding, wider implementation across educational institutions, and strong policy support. These enhancements aim to empower more educators with the skills needed to integrate Māori values and methodologies to **enrich the learning experience** and to continue ongoing maturation of our bicultural national identity in the tertiary education sector.

## Empowering educators and supporting Māori learners

The Māori cultural capability tools and learning opportunities offered by [Ako Aotearoa](#) represent a comprehensive approach to integrating Māori perspectives into Aotearoa New Zealand's tertiary education and training sector. These resources, available through the Ako Aotearoa '[Te Pātaka Mātauranga Māori](#)', include a variety of workshops, resources and events focused on enhancing cultural understanding and teaching practices. Insights from the 2023 Māori cultural capability impact evaluation surveys, and feedback from educators who engaged in self-directed courses, have been instrumental in shaping the 2024 programme. These narratives highlight the **real-world impact and value of the programme for participants**.



Central to the success of the Māori cultural capability programme is the incorporation of the core values of Ako Aotearoa Pūmāutanga (commitment), Māramatanga (insightfulness), Awhitanga (inclusivity), Whanaungatanga (relationships), and Whakamanatanga (empowerment). These values guide the direction and effectiveness of the programme, ensuring it remains relevant and impactful.

The Māori cultural capability programme offers a range of flexible and interactive learning and teaching options. These incorporate multimedia elements and practical application of Māori learning-teaching methodologies, public workshops and customised courses for organisations. A free online Māori cultural capability resource developed by Ako Aotearoa is provided on the Pathways Awarua platform for tertiary educators.

Always adapting to meet the changing needs of adult learners, the Māori cultural capability programme has just developed another learning option. The online '2024 Series of self-directed courses' offers more flexibility for the tertiary educator, with a deeper dive into Māori learning and teaching methodologies, accompanied with an assessment based on reflective practice. This ensures that real practice change is attainable by the educator, with support and mentoring and rewarded with a digital badge. This Māori cultural capability suite of learning options contributes to contemporary educational trends and the diverse needs of the tertiary education sector.

## Conclusion

The Māori cultural capability programme at Ako Aotearoa is one of the keys to embedding Māori cultural knowledge in our tertiary education and training sector. The programme acts as a catalyst to enhance tertiary teaching quality to improve Māori learner success outcomes. This programme embodies Māori cultural respect and inclusivity, and demonstrates a commitment to ongoing innovation and adaptability to meet the educational needs of educators to better support the success outcomes of Māori learners. Furthermore, advocacy for CPI-adjusted funding, broader implementation, and policy support underlines the programme's potential for growth and its critical role in shaping an education system that is culturally responsive and ever evolving.

