

Tertiary Achievement in Pacific Ako (TAPA) Awards - 2026



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

The Tertiary Achievement in Pacific Ako (TAPA) Awards were established in 2009 to encourage Pacific students to pursue tertiary studies at the University of Waikato. The Awards have been made possible by Equity funding administered by the Tertiary Education Commission, with the aim of supporting the participation, achievement, retention, completion, and progression to postgraduate studies, of Pacific students in tertiary education. The Awards are intended to support recipients in the costs associated with their study, e.g. study materials, living costs, conferences, workshops. The number of Awards offered each year differs and is dependent on number and quality of applications and amount of funding available.

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To recognise well rounded Pacific student leaders who actively contribute to the Pacific community, University of Waikato community and set an example for other students in academics and other areas of excellence.

2. Eligibility and Selection Criteria

2.1. To be eligible, applicants must:

- 2.1.1. be of Pacific Island ancestry. The term “Pacific” refers to people and peoples who are inhabitants of, or descendants of inhabitants of, the islands of Moananuiākea / the Pacific Ocean¹ and especially the ‘ocean peoples’ of the Pacific Ocean.
- 2.1.2. be currently enrolled (full- or part-time) in the second year of study or above at the University of Waikato, in both A and B Trimesters in the year of application; and,
- 2.1.3. be eligible for domestic fees status (i.e., be a NZ Citizen, NZ Permanent Resident, NZ Resident Class Visa holder, or Australian Citizen/Permanent Resident domiciled in NZ).

2.2. Selection is based on:

- 2.2.1. personal character
- 2.2.2. active involvement in, and contribution to, Pacific culture and communities
- 2.2.3. academic merit
- 2.2.4. Preference may be given to:
 - a) applicants from areas of study where Pacific students are underrepresented.
 - b) applicants progressing into postgraduate studies and/or completing a qualification.
- 2.2.5. Financial need may also be taken into consideration.

- 2.3. **Ongoing eligibility** is conditional on recipients remaining enrolled in their programme of study in A and B Trimesters in the year of tenure.

¹ Candidates may come from, or have heritage from, various countries, territories, and states including, but not limited to, American Samoa, Bougainville, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Hawaii, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Rapa Nui, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis & Futuna, and West Papua.

3. Value, Awarding and Tenure

- 3.1. Each Award will have a value of **either \$1,000 or \$2,000** and will be paid into the recipient's bank account in one lump sum, normally as soon as practicable after the annual TAPA Award ceremony. If no ceremony is held, payment will be made after the C Trimester withdrawal date.
- 3.2. The amount offered to each recipient is at the discretion of the Selection Panel and will usually be based on criteria such as academic merit and level of study.
- 3.3. The Award will be paid directly to the successful recipient.
- 3.4. The tenure of the award is retained from Trimester B in the year awarded to Trimester A in the following year.
- 3.5. Successful applicants will be advised of the offer of an Award; and must accept the offer by the prescribed date, or the offer will lapse.
- 3.6. In accepting the Award, the recipient will be deemed to have read, understood, and accepted the conditions of the Award and the [Scholarships Policy](#).
- 3.7. Recipients are expected to attend the TAPA Awards Ceremony in the year of tenure.

4. Application

- 4.1. The closing date for applications is **15 July** each year.
- 4.2. As part of the online application process, each applicant must provide information on the following:
 - 4.2.1. Tertiary-level academic achievements;
 - 4.2.2. Future study plans; and
 - 4.2.3. Pacific Cultural and Pacific community contribution, both on- and off-campus.
- 4.3. Applicants must also request the submission of two references (one academic and one cultural/community), as stipulated in the application. References cannot be from an immediate family member.
 - 4.3.1. A referee should be a person of good standing.
 - 4.3.2. The academic referee should be the applicant's current or former teacher or lecturer.
 - 4.3.3. The Pacific cultural/community referee should be from the applicant's relevant Pacific community outside the University. Examples include ministers, community elders, and cultural association leaders who are recognised as such by the community.
 - 4.3.4. A referee should not be related to the applicant, nor write a reference based merely on friendship or other relationship.

5. Selection Panel

- 5.1. The Selection Panel will comprise of the Chair of the Scholarships Committee as the Chair (or nominee), the Assistant Vice-Chancellor Pacific (or nominee), the Dau ni Talitali – Pacific Engagement Manager, and a Pacific staff member at the University of Waikato, as nominated by the Assistant Vice-Chancellor Pacific.
- 5.2. The Selection Panel may refrain from making a recommendation if it finds no applicant of sufficient merit.

- 5.3. The Selection Panel's decision is final and no further correspondence will be entered into following the selection meeting.

6. Other Conditions

- 6.1. The Award may be held together with any other scholarship, award, or prize, unless the conditions of the other award preclude this.
- 6.2. Recipients should seek independent financial advice about any tax implications of their Scholarship.
- 6.3. The Scholarships Committee may terminate an Award at any time and recoup any funds awarded if the holder withdraws from the University, brings the award, programme or the University into disrepute², or is otherwise not complying with the conditions governing the Award and/or the regulations of the University of Waikato. The holder of an Award shall have the right to appeal to the Scholarships Executive against any decision to terminate the Award.
- 6.4. Recipients must remain enrolled at the University of Waikato during the period of tenure. Should a recipient withdraw from study the University may ask for the Scholarship to be repaid.
- 6.5. By accepting an Award, the recipient agrees to participate in any publicity concerning the Award arranged by the University of Waikato. Recipients may also be required to attend a ceremony to recognise the recipients of the Award.
- 6.6. The University may from time to time vary these regulations.

² See [Student Code of Conduct](#).