



POLICY DOCUMENT

Governance Charter Policy

Organisation: Te Akatoki o Te Whare Wānanga of Waitaha (Māori Students' Association) Incorporated (Te Akatoki)

Issue Date: 25 August 2024

Review Date: August 2026

Version: 1

Approved by: Te Akatoki Executive

Approval date: TBC

Owner: Tumuaki, Te Akatoki

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the role and responsibility of the governing bodies in accordance with the Constitution of Te Akatoki and to ensure there are high standards of governance maintained within the organisation.

Definitions

“**Te Akatoki Executive**” and “**the Executive**” means the officers of Te Akatoki, equivalent to a Board of Directors.

This policy applies to

- all members of Te Akatoki
- all elected and coopted members of the Te Akatoki Executive
- the Te Akatoki Advisory Board
- any Te Akatoki member appointed to represent or act on behalf of Te Akatoki
- Third party service providers and contractors to Te Akatoki
- UCSA or UC staff seconded to support Te Akatoki

Scope and context

Effective performance of Te Akatoki requires strong governance structures, comprising an Executive Committee and an Advisory Board.

This policy describes the structure and the relationship between each party. Roles and responsibilities of each governing party are described in the Advisory Board Charter and the Executive Committee Charter.

Policy principles

- **Transparency and Accountability:** This policy ensures clarity of roles and responsibilities, and clarifies what shall happen in the event of a conflict of perspective
- **Equity and Fairness:** The policy will be applied consistently and fairly
- **Ethical Conduct:** Members of the Executive and the Advisory Board are expected to act with integrity and in the best interests of Te Akatoki at all times, with any conflicts of interest disclosed and managed appropriately
- **Regular Review:** The policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains relevant and effective, incorporating any changes in legal or regulatory requirements

Details of the policy

1. Governance Structure

1. The governance structure of Te Akatoki is comprised of two levels:
 - a) an Executive Committee (equivalent to a Board of Directors), referred to as the Te Akatoki Executive or “the Executive”
 - b) an Advisory Board (providing independent advice and support to the Executive)
2. The Executive are the officers of the society for purposes of the Incorporated Societies Act 2022 and Charities Act 2005.

2. Purpose of each level

1. The Te Akatoki Executive is responsible and accountable for the overall direction and performance of Te Akatoki and holds the interests of all its current and future members and its stakeholders, the most significant of whom are taurira Māori at the University of Canterbury.
2. The Advisory Board is responsible for providing advice to the Executive on governance, risk, service and stakeholder management activities of Te Akatoki, and works to protect and enhance the value of the assets and services for its current and future members.

3. Policy Framework

1. Te Akatoki shall introduce, review, and amend if necessary policies and plans that specify best practice for the activities and affairs of Te Akatoki.
2. The policy framework of Te Akatoki is comprised of three levels:
 - a) Te Akatoki Constitution, general meeting resolutions, and referenda;
 - b) Governance policies, charters and the strategic plan; and
 - c) Other operational policies, plans, and processes including the annual plan and budget.

4. Te Akatoki Constitution, General Meeting Resolutions, and Referenda

1. The Executive Committee shall inform all bodies within the governance structure of Te Akatoki of any proposed additions or alterations to The Te Akatoki Constitution, general meeting resolutions, or referenda. Advice from the Advisory Board and if necessary the Te Akatoki Solicitor shall be sought before the Executive proposes any changes to the Te Akatoki Constitution, general meeting resolutions, or referenda.
2. The process of introducing and amending the Te Akatoki Constitution, general meeting resolutions and referenda is covered in Te Akatoki's Constitution.

5. Governance Policies and the Strategic Plan

1. Governance policies shall include charters (including this charter), policies, and other such documents that have been approved.
2. Governance policies are directions to all members of the governance structure and all staff within Te Akatoki of best practice in areas deemed appropriate by the governing bodies
3. All governance policies shall be critically reviewed at least every three years, or earlier if specified on the Executive work plan.
4. Te Akatoki's strategic plan shall be considered alongside governance policies and shall outline the long-term direction of Te Akatoki's overall activities and affairs.
5. Strategic plans may be reviewed on an annual basis with a formal review every five years but should be used/referred to as part of the annual planning process
6. Additions or alterations to governance policies or the strategic plan may be proposed at any time by parties within the governance structure of Te Akatoki.
7. Where a perceived conflict exists between the governance policies and the strategic plan, changes to the governance policies and strategic plan shall be proposed.

6. Other policies, plans and processes

1. Other policies, plans, and processes shall include:
 - a) the annual plan and budget;

- b) operational policies and processes;
- c) Executive Committee and Advisory Board Charters (internal to that body);
- d) policies and processes of affiliated and associated bodies; and
- e) any other policies and processes.

7. Relationship between the governing bodies

1. Te Akatoki is committed to open, full and honest communication between the Advisory Board and Executive to ensure that Te Akatoki is governed effectively.
2. The role of the Advisory Board is to provide advice and/or recommendations to the Executive
3. The Executive Committee as the decision-making governance structure will then consider the advice and/or recommendations and make the decision.
4. In the event that the Executive disagrees with the Advisory Board's recommendation then a joint meeting between the Advisory Board and Executive, or a nominated sub-committee of each party, will be arranged to discuss the matter before the final decision is made. This is to ensure that the Executive has all the relevant information to make an informed decision.

Related documents

- Te Akatoki Code of Conduct
- Te Akatoki Advisory Board Charter
- Te Akatoki Executive Charter
- Te Akatoki Strategic Plan
- Te Akatoki Annual Plan and Programme of Work

Review of policy

This policy is due for review in August 2025.