



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

Governance Charter

Organisation	Te Akatoki o Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha (Māori Students' Association) Incorporated (Te Akatoki)
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Version	2
Approved by	Te Akatoki Executive, after consultation with the Te Akatoki Advisory Board or equivalent advisory body, once established.
Approval Date	14 September 2026
Owner	Tumuaki

1. Purpose

- a) This charter clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Te Akatoki Executive and Advisory Board under the Te Akatoki Constitution. It supports consistent governance practice across Te Akatoki and confirms how governance decision-making and advisory support are intended to work together.
- b) This charter gives effect to Te Akatoki's kaupapa Māori values of whanaungatanga, manaakitanga/aroha, and ūkaipōtanga, and must be read alongside the Te Akatoki Constitution.

2. Introduction

- a) Te Akatoki relies on strong governance by its Executive, supported by advice from the Advisory Board. This charter explains how the Executive and Advisory Board work together while preserving a clear separation between governance decision-making and advisory support.
- b) The Executive holds formal governance authority under the Constitution. The Advisory Board provides independent advice and support to assist the Executive's decision-making.
- c) If there is any conflict, inconsistency, or misalignment between this charter and the Te Akatoki Constitution, the Constitution prevails to the extent of that conflict, inconsistency, or misalignment.

3. Principles

- a) **Whanaungatanga, transparency, and accountability:** This charter supports clear, transparent, and accountable decision-making by recognising relationships, connection, and shared responsibility across the Executive, Advisory Board, members, whānau, and the wider Te Akatoki community.
- b) **Manaakitanga/aroha, equity, and fairness:** This charter is to be applied consistently and fairly across Te Akatoki governance processes, with care, generosity, respect, and support for others.
- c) **Ukaipōtanga and 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, grounded in belonging, home, and connection to place, and in accordance with the Te Akatoki Code of Conduct.

4. Governance Structure

- a) Te Akatoki's governance structure has two levels:
 - i. Executive, being the elected governing body of Te Akatoki under the Constitution
 - ii. Advisory Board, which provides independent advice and support to the Executive.
- b) Executive Members are Officers of Te Akatoki for the purposes of the Incorporated Societies Act 2022 and Charities Act 2005. A person who is not an Executive Member may

also be an Officer if they occupy a position that allows them to exercise significant influence over the management or administration of Te Akatoki, as provided in the Constitution and applicable law.

5. Purpose of Each Level

- a) The Te Akatoki Executive is responsible and accountable for Te Akatoki's overall direction and performance. It must act in the interests of current and future members, with particular regard to tauira Māori at the University of Canterbury.
- b) The Advisory Board advises the Executive on governance, risk, services, and stakeholder management, helping protect and strengthen Te Akatoki's assets and services for current and future members.

6. Relationship Between the Governing Bodies

- a) Te Akatoki is committed to open and honest communication between the Advisory Board and Executive so Te Akatoki is governed effectively.
- b) The Advisory Board provides advice and recommendations to the Executive.
- c) The Executive considers that advice and makes governance decisions.
- d) If the Executive disagrees with an Advisory Board recommendation, the Executive and Advisory Board, or nominated representatives of each body, should meet to discuss the matter before the Executive makes a final decision.

7. Policy Framework

- a) Te Akatoki will introduce, review, and, where necessary, amend policies and plans that support good practice in its activities and affairs.
- b) The policy framework of Te Akatoki comprises 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.

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

- a) The Executive must inform all relevant governance bodies of proposed changes to the Te Akatoki Constitution, general meeting resolutions, or referenda.
- b) Before proposing changes, the Executive should seek advice from the Advisory Board and, where necessary, obtain legal advice.
- c) The process for introducing and amending the Te Akatoki Constitution, general meeting resolutions, and referenda is set out in Te Akatoki's Constitution.

7.2. Governance Policies and the Strategic Plan

- a) Governance policies include approved charters, policies, and related governance documents.

- b) Governance policies guide governance bodies and staff on agreed good practice.
- c) All governance policies must be reviewed at least every three years, or earlier if specified in the Executive work plan.
- d) Te Akatoki's strategic plan outlines the long-term direction of Te Akatoki's activities and affairs and should be considered alongside governance policies.
- e) Strategic plans may be reviewed annually, with a formal review at least every five years, and should inform the annual planning process.
- f) Parties within Te Akatoki's governance structure may propose changes to governance policies or the strategic plan at any time.
- g) Where governance policies and the strategic plan appear to conflict, proposed changes should be considered to resolve the inconsistency.

7.3. Other Policies, Plans, and Processes

- a) Other policies, plans, and processes include:
 - i. The annual plan and budget;
 - ii. Operational policies and processes;
 - iii. Policies and processes of affiliated and associated bodies.

8. Review of this Charter

- a) The Tumuaki, or their delegate, is responsible for coordinating each review of this charter.
- b) Any amendments to this charter must be approved by the Te Akatoki Executive before taking effect. Before approving amendments, the Executive must consult the Te Akatoki Advisory Board or equivalent advisory body, once established, and consider any advice or recommendations received.
- c) This charter is reviewed as part of Te Akatoki's governance review and at least once every three years. The Executive must approve any changes before they take effect.