

Tapatoru - Guidance for Referees

What's this about?

You may be reading this because a colleague approached you to provide one of the two professional references they need for their Tapatoru portfolio.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and clarity for this process. There are two parts:

1. Key information. Here you'll find the main things that you need to know and do.
2. Other FAQ: Here you'll find other frequently asked questions.

Part 1 - Key Information

What is the function of the referees' supporting statements?

The award of the Tapatoru includes peer recognition of the applicant's professional practise supporting or teaching foundation learners. The applicant has asked you to support their application as a valued peer with expertise in this area.

We use the two written statements provided by the referees to confirm that the submission presents a fair and accurate reflection of the applicant's professional practice.

Am I the right person to provide a supporting statement for the applicant?

Ako Aotearoa expects that you:

- Have current or recent experience of working in foundation education. This can include management or professional development.
- Have worked with the applicant including within the last two years.
- Have first-hand knowledge of their professional practice.
- Are in a position to comment on and substantiate the applicant's record of effectiveness within their teaching or learner support context.
- Can confirm that the applicant has represented their practice accurately.
- Provide your opinion that they meet the requirements for the Tapatoru award.

The supporting statements from referees:

- Should reflect professional relationships. This means that they should not be from family members or based on personal friendships.
- Are an independent and authentic account.

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Can I decline the request to provide a supporting statement?

If you are not in a position to support this application then you should decline. Your supporting statement won't be accepted if its professional integrity is called into question.

How do I get up to speed quickly?

In addition to this guidance document, read and refer to the following:

1. **The Tapatoru - An Overview.** [Start with this](#). The PDF gives you a brief summary of the Tapatoru professional standards framework and awards.
2. **Tapatoru Referee's Template.** This is what you write your response in and send back to us.

Also, arrange a time to speak with the applicant about their Tapatoru work. This should include a discussion about their Tapatoru reflective questions and answers.

What do I need to do to write a referee's supporting statement?

There are three things you need to do in the Referee's Template:

1. Complete the Tapatoru Referee's Confidence Assessment. This is a short survey based on the key values of the Tapatoru.
2. Write a short supporting statement of approximately 300 to 500 words.
3. Agree to the declaration on the first page and complete your own details.

Your statements are confidential. Once completed you can email them directly to us noting the name of the applicant that you are supporting. Please send to:

- K.Rive@massey.ac.nz

How do I structure my written statement?

Please use the question prompts below to help structure your supporting statements. These prompts match questions in the confidence survey. You **don't** need to address every question, but please use your professional judgement to:

- Use the prompts below to structure what you write.
- Expand on the prompts, or be selective, as appropriate.
- Summarise or synthesise your response.

Question prompts

How does the applicant:

1. Encourage or foster positive and meaningful relationships and support systems?

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2. Maintain, promote and protect the wellbeing - the mana - of their learners, their whanau, and communities?
3. Understand how to embed adult literacy, numeracy and cultural capability into their content and context?
4. Use effective approaches, concepts and resources that enhance foundation learning experiences for Māori, Pacific or youth?
5. Design and plan learning in ways that strengthen learners' foundation learning skills?
6. Facilitate foundation learning or support foundation learners effectively?
7. Use assessment and give feedback to foundation learners in ways that are relevant and appropriate?
8. Engage with their stakeholders?
9. Engage with ongoing professional learning and development?

Part 2 - Other Frequently Asked Questions

What do you mean by current or recent practice?

The application for the Tapatoru Award is based on current and recent practice supporting and teaching foundation learners. This means that ideally, evidence should be from within the last two years.

If you no longer work with the applicant, it is important that you are familiar with their recent work. In the template, you are required to indicate how long you have worked together.

What are the requirements of the Tapatoru Award?

The applicant needs to provide evidence of effectiveness in relation to their professional role and experience in foundation learning. This should encompass teaching and/or learning support responsibilities.

If the applicant has learners, workers or clients who need support with language, literacy or numeracy, then the Tapatoru is the right professional standards framework for them.

The experience and evidence included in the applicant's reflective commentary must relate to working with foundation learners. This is likely to include courses up to Level 4 on the New Zealand Qualification Framework.

Typically, Tapatoru applicants are practitioners:

- Seeking to expand their understanding and practice of working with foundation-level learners and programmes, including adult language, literacy, numeracy, and cultural capability. Their roles may encompass teaching and/or learning support, and often include those who embed literacy and numeracy into vocational training and support.
- Working in partnership with roles that may span education and training, workplace and employment; and community contexts.

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Often applicants are tutors who may be working towards or already have gained an appropriate adult teaching or other relevant qualification, such as one of the following:

- New Zealand Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education (Vocational/Workplace) (40 credits, Level 5).
- New Zealand Certificate in Adult and Tertiary Teaching (60 credits, Level 5).

What are the specific criteria you're looking for?

The Tapatoru is awarded to practitioners who can:

Demonstrate a broad understanding of effective approaches to teaching and/or learning support with evidence of:

1. A commitment to the Tapatoru professional values.
2. Appropriate base-level knowledge across all areas of professional knowledge.
3. Successful engagement in appropriate teaching and/or learner support practices across all areas of professional practice.
4. Successful engagement in continuing professional learning and development in relation to foundation education. This encompasses teaching, learning, assessment, learning support, pastoral care, and other areas as appropriate.

What else do I need to think about?

In addition to the criteria described here, it is important that you comment on the following in your supporting statement as appropriate or relevant:

- Your own experience of the applicant's recent foundation learning practice.
- Observation of the applicant's teaching.
- Examples of how they support learning.
- Any good or innovative practices or contribution to developments in the field by the applicant in teaching and/or supporting learning.
- Your perspective on any practical examples or illustrations that would support the applicant's portfolio.