



TE ORANGA AOTEAROA

KOTAHITANGA
MANAAKITANGA
TAKAWAENGA

NZMSA

NEW ZEALAND
MEDICAL STUDENTS'
ASSOCIATION

Statement on the MAPAS Review

18 September 2026

Te Oranga Aotearoa and the New Zealand Medical Students' Association (NZMSA) stand firmly in support of the *Māori and Pacific Admissions Scheme* (MAPAS) at Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland and the *Health Professional Programme Admissions Pathways* (formerly Te Kauae Parāoa) at Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka | University of Otago. These critical admissions policies for entry into health professional programmes have been a current topic of debate within politics, and respectively, as the national representative bodies for Māori medical tauira and New Zealand medical students, it is our responsibility to share how this discourse impacts us.

Recent calls for these pathways to be abolished have stirred deep concern among Māori and Pacific health practitioners and students. These pathways exist to address racism and inequity within education and health, and the persistent under-representation of Māori and Pacific within medicine.

Māori and Pacific populations have historically faced, and continue to experience, unequal access to education. These inequities begin long before a student applies to medical school. Access to well-resourced schooling, technology, financial security, and other forms of educational advantage create barriers to entering career pathways such as medicine. Equity-focused pathways recognise these realities and seek to address these barriers to higher education, whilst maintaining and prioritising the high academic standards required to become a doctor.

Racism has conflated the idea that our tauira have a “free-ride” into medicine or that standards are lowered to enable our entry. This is both misinformation and disinformation on full display.

Regardless of the pathway through which a student applies to a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery programme, they are required to meet the same academic threshold for admission. Once accepted, every student completes the same accredited medical programme and must meet the same rigorous academic, clinical, and professional standards in order to graduate. There are no exceptions to these graduation standards based on race or ethnicity. To suggest otherwise discredits the intellect, hard work, and calibre of Māori and Pacific medical graduates.

Te Oranga Aotearoa and NZMSA are deeply concerned that significant political claims are being made about the Government's Pathways Review while the review itself remains unavailable to the public. ACT leader David Seymour has publicly stated his party will campaign to disestablish these pathways while citing his interpretation of the review, of which tauira, whānau, universities, communities, and the wider public have not been able to examine.

We call for the review to be released in full and without further delay. If the review is to be used to justify significant changes to Māori and Pacific admissions to medical school, then the evidence must be open to public scrutiny.

For our tauira, this is more than a debate about admissions policy.

Māori and Pacific tauira have had their achievements, hard work, and right to belong in medicine become the subject of political debate and public scrutiny. This rhetoric extends beyond the political domain. It follows tauira into universities and clinical environments, across social media platforms, and seeps into their everyday lives. It makes these spaces unsafe and emboldens racist and hateful commentary.



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So, to our tauira, we want to be clear:

You belong here.
Your place in medicine is earned.
Your contribution is valued.
And you have our unwavering support.

Tauira mā, you have all worked relentlessly for your place in medicine. You meet the standards required of you. Your presence strengthens medical education, the health workforce, and the care received by communities throughout Aotearoa.

There is space for you in every area of medicine, and your future should be shaped by your own aspirations and strengths, not by the expectations others place upon you.

Te Oranga Aotearoa and NZMSA will continue to support tauira wellbeing and aspirations. We promise to work extensively alongside Māori and Pacific health leaders, universities, iwi, communities, and our regional rōpū, to protect and strengthen pathways that contribute to Hauora Māori excellence and a stronger, more equitable health workforce for Aotearoa.

Our position is grounded in evidence, in the persistent need to address Māori and Pacific under-representation, in the aroha we carry for our tauira, and in Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a foundation for Māori participation, equity, and tino rangatiratanga within health and education.

Kia ū, kia māia, kia manawanui.

Be resolute, be brave, be steadfast.



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