

Do you know an **outstanding Adult Learner?**

The festival of
**Adult Learning
Ahurei Ākonga**

Now is your chance to recognise their efforts
through the 2026 Adult Learner Awards.

What is the Festival of Adult Learning Ahurei Ākonga?

The Festival of Adult Learning Ahurei Ākonga is a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) initiative supported by the Tertiary Education Commission, adult and community education providers at a local level, and the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO.

It was established in Aotearoa, New Zealand, in 1998 to raise the profile of adult learning. It is an opportunity to celebrate the successes and achievements of everyone participating in Adult and Community Education (ACE).

This festival recognises that all adult learning achievements are worth celebrating. Whether it's teaching English to an immigrant in a private home, attending a programme at the local library; being part of a community support group, attending a private training organisation, or earning a university degree.

Many stories are inspirational. In being told, people who thought learning was not for them, are encouraged with endless possibilities.

The Festival of Adult Learning Ahurei Ākonga at Wintec

Wintec has offered the Wintec Adult Learner Awards since 2004, with the purpose of recognising and celebrating adult students studying at Wintec.

The Executive Director Academic Delivery of Wintec (or delegate) awards the Wintec Adult Learner Awards which have been awarded based on the recommendation of a selection panel.

The awards will be announced during the Festival of Adult Learning Ahurei Ākonga week, (7–11 September 2026).



Chelsea Gotty
2025 winner

Nomination Regulations

The awards are known as the Wintec Adult Learner Awards and shall be awarded annually.

There will be four categories for the awards as follows:

Category A: Adult Learner Award

Two awards of \$1,000 each for students enrolled full-time or part-time at Wintec in a mainstream programme.

Category B: Foundation Adult Learner Award

One award of \$1,000 for a student enrolled at Wintec in a foundation programme (Levels 1–4, with a pathway into a higher qualification).

Category C: Māori and Pacific Adult Learner Award

Two awards of \$1,000 each for students enrolled full-time or part-time at Wintec in a mainstream programme. Open to Māori or Pacific students only.

Category D: International Adult Learner Award

One award of \$1,000 for an International student enrolled full-time or part-time at Wintec in a mainstream programme.

Nominees must meet the following criteria:

- Be 25 years or over.
- Be enrolled in a full-time or part-time programme at Wintec in the year the award is presented.
- Balance roles and responsibilities associated with being an adult learner.

NB: A mainstream programme refers to any Wintec programme (excluding foundation programmes) at Level 4 and above that leads to a formal qualification (Certificate, Diploma, Degree, Graduate Certificate and Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma or Master's).

NB: Students nominated for the Foundation Award must be enrolled in a Wintec foundation programme at levels 1 to 4 that pathways into a higher qualification at Wintec.

Nominees should demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Learns with infectious enthusiasm.
- Demonstrates commitment to programme of study.
- Supports and encourages other learners to engage in learning activities.
- Is willing to share new skills, knowledge, and abilities with others.
- Challenges themselves and others with new ideas.
- Undertakes other roles and responsibilities in addition to their study.

**All stories are inspirational
and by telling them...**

**...we encourage people who
thought that learning...**

**...was not for them, that there
are endless possibilities.**

Completing the Nomination

Nomination forms are available from: wintec.ac.nz/scholarship-list.

Nomination forms:

- Must be completed by a Wintec staff member or student(s) in conjunction with the adult learner nominated.
- Nominees must agree to being nominated by signing off the nomination form.
- Nominations can only be made on the recommendation of staff or students; you cannot nominate or complete the nomination form yourself.

Must be completed electronically, are not handwritten.

(wintec.ac.nz/scholarship-list)

- Must be submitted to Group Director by **Friday 17 July 2026, 12pm**.
- Should be completed in no fewer than 300 words (50 words per characteristic) detailing the way in which the nominee meets the criteria and characteristics.
- Optional: To support nominations, applicants are encouraged to provide at least two photographs of them in their learning environment (e.g., clinical practice, working with a class group on a project).

Nomination Requirements

Each category entry form includes basic information about the nominee and requires signatures from them, the Programme Co-ordinator/Team Manager and Group Director.

Nominators will need to describe, with examples, how the student demonstrates the following characteristics (at least 50 words per characteristic – minimum of 300 and maximum 600 words in total):

- Learns with infectious enthusiasm.
- Demonstrates commitment to programme of study.
- Supports and encourages other learners to engage in learning activities.
- Is willing to share new skills, knowledge, and abilities with others.
- Challenges themselves and others with new ideas.
- Undertakes other roles and responsibilities in addition to their study.



Phillip Simon
2025 runner up

The Nomination Process

1. Completed nomination forms must be submitted to Group Director by Friday 17 July 2026, 12pm.
2. From the nominations put forward by staff and students, each Group Director can only put forward a set number of nominations from their respective School or Centre. This number includes nominations across all categories. The School/Centre needs to ensure that each application is entered into the most appropriate category.
3. This means that while there is no limit to the number of nominations staff and students can put forward, it is important to understand that only a limited number of nominations progress through to the selection panel. The Executive Director Academic Delivery has confirmed the number of nominations each School/Centre can submit:

Centre/School	Nominations
Centre for Health and Social Practice	6
Centre for Education and Foundation Pathways	5
Centre for Business and Enterprise	3
Centre for Trades	5
School of Media Arts	4
Centre for Information Technology	3
Centre for Industrial Design	2
Centre for Engineering	2
Centre for Languages	3
Centre for Applied Science	2
Centre for Primary Industries	2
Centre for Sport Science and Human Performance	3

4. Successful nominations must be forwarded to Melia Kape (Office of the Dean) on Wednesday 22 July 2026.
5. The Adult Learner Award selection panel will select the final award winners. The selection panel will be made up of the Executive Director Academic Delivery, Pouārahi Māori, Executive Director Ākonga Success and Experience, International Director and Teaching and Learning Manager.

6. The selection panel may refrain from making a recommendation for an Adult Learner Award in any category, if it finds no candidate of sufficient merit. The decision of the selection panel will be final, and no correspondence will be entered into. All nominations will be forwarded to the selection panel on Thursday 23 July 2026.
7. Students and staff will be notified of the Awards through the usual communication channels. Please ensure that the contact details provided on the nomination forms are clear and current.
8. The \$1,000 award will be paid directly into the successful recipient's nominated bank account. Award recipients must complete and return the appropriate documentation in order for the money to be transferred into the nominated bank account.

By acceptance of an award, each recipient agrees to participate in publicity concerning the Festival of Adult Learning Ahurei Ākongā.

Timeframes

17 July 2026

Nominations close. All nomination forms must be submitted to Group Director by 12pm.

Wednesday 22 July 2026

Selected nominations forwarded by Group Director to Melia Kape (Office of the Dean).

Thursday 23 July 2026

Successful nominations forwarded to the selection panel.

Tuesday 8 September 2026

Wintec Adult Learner Awards Announced.



Devina Pai
2025 winner

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Adult Learning
Ahurei Ākonga

Adult
Learner
Awards