



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Te Orowaru

User Guide



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Te Orowaru means “the sound of rippling water,” which speaks of our aspirations to create ripples of change through the system, for our workplaces, communities and whānau here in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Our aspiration for Te Orowaru is that it enables the unique skills that all people bring to our workplaces to be recognised and fairly valued.



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Introduction

Te Orowaru is a work assessment tool, designed to provide a robust, modern, and equitable way to work through a pay equity claim process or a job evaluation in compliance with the Equal Pay Act 1972. Te Orowaru was designed collaboratively between the Government of Aotearoa New Zealand, the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions -Te Kauae Kaimahi (NZCTU) pay equity practitioners, and cultural experts. Te Orowaru means “the sound of rippling water” in te reo Māori.

There are four key documents that form Te Orowaru:

- The user guide
- The questionnaire/interview guide
- The factor plan
- The factor scoring booklet

However, there are other materials and resources that parties to a job evaluation or pay equity work assessment process may find of use, in particular the pay equity process guide.

What are factors?

Because all the elements of an occupation or role are so complex, and we are not used to thinking about work in a deep and considered way it is useful to break work down into more ‘bite sized’ pieces. This makes analysis easier and can assist people to navigate through all the detail of what they do every day. These ‘bite size’ pieces are called factors. Te Orowaru has 14 factors in 4 ‘factor families’.

‘Factor families’ are groupings of skills, responsibilities, effort, and conditions that each factor sits underneath to ensure that work has been examined in compliance with the Equal Pay Act 1972.



What makes Te Orowaru unique?

Work assessment tools are not new. Many workplaces both here in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally utilise work assessment tools to decide what new jobs should be paid, or in an effort to close gender pay gaps. However, there are a range of factors which make Te Orowaru stand out:

The input

Many work assessment tools are designed for the data or information that goes into them to come from the employer and/or the job description (written and designed by the employer). While information from the employer can be useful (interviews of employers are encouraged with Te Orowaru) the primary input for work assessment with Te Orowaru is the experience of the workers themselves. Evidence from work assessment processes which have used Te Orowaru shows that workers are frequently articulating that the work they do requires skills, responsibility and effort that are not anywhere in job descriptions or performance expectations. The work they do daily often surprises the employer as well. This may be because the work has changed and evolved over time, or it may be work which is characterised by skills which have been undervalued historically. Examples of skills that are often undervalued or unrecognised are those associated with caring, communicating or managing relationships.

The Te Orowaru questionnaire, which is specifically designed to elicit a full range of deep and rich information about all the aspects of work being undertaken, allows the true depth and breadth of an occupation or role to be surfaced. This has tangible benefits for both the employer and employee. Employers are often able to better articulate the competencies they require in the recruitment process, resulting in better equipped employees, while employees can see their work in all its rich complexity and take pride in this.

Modern concepts and language

Many work assessment tools were created 10 years (or more) ago. Many were also created overseas and informed by the cultural norms and values present in that country. While these tools may have been tweaked occasionally most have not undergone a thorough update in terms of language and the concepts explored. There was a clear need for a tool that was both fit for purpose in the modern world and responsive to the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. Some of the thinking that fed into shaping an up to date, appropriate tool was:

- the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic forced us to change some of the ways that we worked and in turn some of our ideas and approaches to the workplace. For example, with a lot more engagement and activities occurring online, it became important to recognise and value the skills of running a meeting or presenting online as opposed to in person.
- the advancement of information technology and systems. The complexity of information systems, and the responsibility for personal and commercial data has rapidly increased over the last 10 years. This necessitated a more sophisticated and ultimately standalone information/information systems factor to describe and accurately capture this.
- our recognition of diversity and the different ways that communities engage and receive information has also developed significantly, even over the last 5 years. Te Orowaru was developed to ensure that all aspects of interpersonal and communication skills are considered, providing examples such as engaging with people from different class backgrounds, neurodiverse communities, different religions, and ethnicities.



Calculation of remuneration

Many work assessment tools provide for a factor score to be produced which links to market data or a database of remuneration. A factor score will equate to a certain pay band or range and/or be subject to a mathematical formula that delivers a remuneration outcome. However, despite long term use of these kinds of tools in many organisations across Aotearoa/New Zealand, gender and ethnic pay gaps are still present. The pay equity process has highlighted the concern that a connection to market data and remuneration databases may in fact reimport bias and discrimination into a work assessment process.

The Equal Pay Act 1972 requires the use of comparators, (usually more than one) which are male dominated occupations (or female dominated if they already settled a pay equity claim) whose skill, responsibility, effort, and conditions are also assessed and compared to the workforce you are establishing remuneration for. Once you have established how comparable the occupations are the next step in the process is to compare remuneration. The principle underpinning this process is that work of equivalent level of skill, responsibility and effort should be paid equitably. The pay equity process guide provides more detail on this.

Cultural strength

Designed in Aotearoa New Zealand Te Orowaru proudly reflects the partnership relationship with Māori as expressed in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The importance of this partnership to our country means that recognising and valuing properly skills in te ao Māori is integral to fairly valuing work. This is seen in the world's first stand-alone factor for te ao Māori skills in work. This factor applies to all workers and surfaces cultural competencies that are integral in a role, but often go unrecognised and unremunerated.

Multicultural skills and competencies also have a strong presence in Te Orowaru. The tool goes beyond traditional job evaluation tools which tend to consider language as the only cultural competency with value. Te Orowaru considers multicultural skills holistically including:

- knowledge of different cultures
- adapting resources or materials for cultural suitability
- building inclusion into systems and practices
- responsibility for sacred or culturally significant materials or objects
- knowledge built by experience working in different cultural contexts.



Glossary of terms used in pay equity and Te Orowaru

Term	Explanation
Active listening	Active listening is the ability to focus completely on a speaker, understand their message, comprehend the information, and respond thoughtfully
Analysis	Analysis is the process of breaking a complex topic or system into smaller parts to gain a better understanding of it
Authoritative	Commanding and self-confident; likely to be respected and trusted
Authority over	The ability to make decisions and direct others to carry out tasks
Breadth	Wide range or extent of knowledge or experience across different areas
Claimant	The claimant is the person/party raising the pay equity claim with the employer
Comparator	An occupation or role that is chosen to be assessed as part of a work assessment process. The results of this assessment then provide information about how similar the level of skill, responsibility and effort is to a claimant role or occupation.
Competent	Someone who can perform the role fully
Complex	Not easy to analyse or understand; complicated or intricate
Conceptual thinking	The ability to understand a situation or problem by identifying patterns or connections, and addressing key underlying issues
Creative	Being able to think of something new or about that thing in a different way
Deescalate	To reduce the intensity of a situation
Demand	Something which requires effort to fulfil and/or places stress on a person
Depth	Extensive and detailed study or knowledge in a particular area
Dexterity	The ability to do a difficult action quickly and skilfully with the hands.



Term	Explanation
Diplomacy	The art of dealing with people in a sensitive and tactful way
Discretion	The ability to make choices about how you undertake your work and find solutions to problems. Also, can be used to refer to the ability to keep information private and confidential
Disproportionate	Something that is too large or too small in comparison with something else
Effort	The physical or mental energy used to achieve the outcome
Emotional dexterity	The ability to move quickly between different emotionally demanding situations and utilise the appropriate interpersonal skills for the context
Escalate	If a situation escalates or if someone or something escalates it, it becomes greater in size, seriousness, or intensity
Equal pay	Two people doing the same job, with equivalent levels of experience being paid the same regardless of their gender
Factor	A common method to analyse work is by unpacking it into its parts, which are often referred to as factors. The factors describe elements of the work including skills used, responsibilities undertaken and conditions and demands placed on someone who is carrying out the work. It can be a useful tool to support understanding the level of skills, responsibility, and effort present in different work
Hapū	Kinship group, clan, tribe, subtribe - section of a large kinship group and the primary political unit in traditional Māori society
Harmonious	Having agreement between people
Hui	A meeting / gathering
Induction	Induction is the process of introducing a new employee to their job and organisation and giving them all the necessary information required by them to start their work



Term	Explanation
Influence	Influence is the ability to affect how someone thinks or behaves, or how something develops without having direct authority over someone or a situation
Innovative	Introducing new ideas; original and creative in thinking
Intense	The degree to which something operates at, i.e., the more intense the fire is the hotter it will burn
Interviewee	The person who answers questions by the interviewer
Iwi	Extended kinship group, tribe often refers to a large group of people descended from a common ancestor and associated with a distinct territory
Jobholder	Someone employed in an organisation to do a specific job (regardless of employment arrangement)
Kaitiakitanga	Guardianship, stewardship, trusteeship
Kanohi kitea	Physical presence - a term to express the importance of meeting people face to face
Mana	A person who holds respect, authority, influence, and honour
Manaakitanga	Hospitality, kindness, generosity, support - the process of showing respect and care for others
Manage up	Making your manager's job easier providing useful feedback, supporting their upskilling in areas where you have more expertise, or supporting the objectives or goals or your manager
Manager	Responsible for the organisation of what work gets done, setting objectives, making decisions, and delegating work
Menial	Perceived as not requiring much skill and lacking prestige
Methodologies	A set of methods, principles, and rules used in your work



Term	Explanation
Multi-sensory demands	Demands which require the use of more than one sense at a time, e.g., smell, taste, hearing, sight, touch
Negative impact	An event or action which places stress on those experiencing it
Pākehā	New Zealander of European descent - probably originally applied to English-speaking Europeans living in Aotearoa/New Zealand
Pay equity	The same pay for different work which has the same/similar level of skill, responsibility, and effort.
Pay gap	When some groups of people earn less than others, on average.
Pay parity	Aligning the pay of the same or similar workforces across different employers, organisations, and workplaces.
Pay transparency	A range of actions to make pay information more visible inside and outside an organisation. Actions can include disclosing pay bands and organisations identifying and reporting on their gender and ethnic pay gaps.
Policies	Any standard, statement, or procedure set by the agency/organisation
Practices	The expected way of doing something
Professional standards	A set of practices, ethics, and behaviours that members of a particular professional group must follow. These standards are frequently agreed to by a governing body that represents the interests of the group
Qualitative assessment	A method of understanding how people make meaning of and experience their environment or world
Sensory	The engaging of the physical senses i.e., smell, taste, hearing, sight, touch
Service delivery	The process of providing a service to customers or the internal clients of an agency or organisation



Term	Explanation
Software	The programmes used on a computer to carry out your job.
Specialist	A person highly skilled in a specific and restricted field.
Supervisor	Responsible for how work gets done by monitoring employees and activities, working alongside employees to make sure tasks are being performed at a certain level, and making decisions approved by a manager
Systems	A group of interdependent items that interact regularly to perform a task
Tapu	Be sacred, prohibited, restricted, set apart, forbidden
Tauīwi	People who are not Māori
Te ao Māori	The Māori world view
Te reo Māori	The Māori language
Te reo Māori me ngā tikanga	The Māori language and its cultural practices
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	Te Tiriti o Waitangi is an important agreement that was signed by representatives of the British Crown and Māori in 1840
Theory	A set of principles on which the practice of an activity is based
Tikanga	Customs, rules, way of doing things from a te ao Māori perspective
Whānau	Your family, extended family, community, or related families
Whanaungatanga	Relationship, kinship, sense of family connection - a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging



Term	Explanation
Work assessment	A process to understand a job. The first step is to define what is being measured and ensure that overlooked, hidden or undervalued skills, responsibilities and demands are uncovered and included in the assessment. Any assessment of work should be free of assumptions based on gender. Interviewing employees is a key component of assessing the work but multiple sources of information, such as health and safety data, applicable registration or licensing information, and academic research can be drawn on to ensure that all the skills, responsibilities and demands of an occupation are understood
Work practices	How the employee carries out specific duties and tasks related to their job description









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