

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Integrity

What is integrity?

Integrity can mean different things to different people. A good definition is demonstrating honesty and uncompromising adherence to strong ethical principles. Importantly, it is not just about complying with the law – that is a given. It is about doing the right thing. It is about aligning both your commitment and your behaviour with strong ethical values or principles in a consistent and uncompromising way.

Within te ao Māori, the concepts of tika, pono, and aroha are present in conversations about integrity.¹ When considered together, the principles tika, pono, and aroha convey doing the right thing with integrity and love.²

Why does integrity matter?

Integrity is at the core of how we expect public organisations to operate. Acting with integrity:

- helps build and maintain trust and confidence;
- enables services and outcomes to be delivered;
- helps build meaningful relationships; and
- links to long-term stewardship obligations.

About this guide

This guide is for governors and senior managers. It links to an integrity framework for the public sector and emphasises the importance of applying integrity to your work and the decisions you make. It links to our guidance on what good looks like when acting with integrity – for example, managing conflicts of interest and maintaining the probity of significant processes. Adopting a culture of integrity can help you manage risks, operate with high ethical standards, and maintain trust.

Putting integrity at the core of how you operate

Establishing a culture of integrity includes:

- having a **framework** in place that provides an integrated approach to establishing or examining the values, systems, and norms in your workplace;
- having the right **infrastructure** – building blocks of good values, ethical leadership, a code of conduct, policies and procedures, people processes, a culture of listening and speaking up, clear roles and responsibilities, measuring and reporting progress, and assurance and accountability;
- being able to **apply** integrity through ways of working – making an ongoing commitment, prioritising relationships, making it easy, building alignment, providing transparency, and being inclusive; and
- ensuring that senior managers and governors establish, promote, **monitor**, and **review** the culture of integrity – continually looking for ways to do better.

Where to find out more

[Audit New Zealand's assurance services](#)

[Putting integrity at the core of how public organisations operate: An integrity framework for the public sector](#)

[What good looks like: Managing conflicts of interest](#)

[What good looks like: Managing probity](#)

¹ Mead, Hirini Moko (2016), Tikanga Māori: Living by Māori values (Rev. ed.), Huia Publishers.

² Stewart, G, Smith, V, Diamond, P, Paul, N, and Hogg, R (2021), "Ko te Tika, ko te Pono, ko te Aroha: Exploring Māori values in the university", Te Kaharoa, Vol. 14, No. 1.