

## Why Maori Deserve Open Entry to Universities

First of all, we should consider the reasons not to open universities to Maori. Essentially, there is one major argument here, which is that it's 'unfair' that they should not have to work. On a more minor note, there is some contestation about courses with competitive entry. To deal initially with that minor point, we should assume that this applies exclusively to open entry courses, and only in the first year: it wouldn't guarantee Maori a spot in second year medicine or law, for example.

Now, let's consider this notion of 'unfairness'. Under the status quo, Maori live what is essentially an 'unfair' existence: over 40% are under the poverty line and their lack of qualifications breeds a stereotype of stupidity which leads many of them not to get jobs, even when they are qualified. This actively encourages many not to succeed. But let's return to our 'poor Maori contingent'. Currently, because statistically they are very poor, they go to very poor schools, receive very poor education and overall, do very poorly. This is the reality of our unfortunate school zoning system. Less than half of Maori boys achieve Level 1. This is not a reflection of natural intelligence, but more the product of the system not being remotely conducive to success. In short, Maori do worse because they are poorer and have fewer opportunities. We should consider equally that many of these schools do not offer the appropriate NCEA Achievement Standards for Maori to gain University Entrance, only offering NCEA Unit Standards. This robs people of the opportunity to succeed before they've even begun!

So, we see that there is an imbalance here, and when there is imbalance, it becomes the responsibility of the government to right it. What this requires is a giving out of some of these lost opportunities, in an attempt to right the playing field. Some might even say that we have a responsibility to Maori for our historical exploitation of them. By allowing Maori the opportunity to go to Uni even without qualifications, you eradicate the opportunity imbalance and give those who actively want to learn the opportunity to do so. In reality, this is likely to be a minority so will not greatly impact, if at all, on other students. These students who do take up the opportunity would obviously be required to pass etc in order to continue their course.

So these are the short term benefits: let's look at the long term. If more Maori have education and qualification, it achieves something in getting rid of our skewed perception of them. More importantly, it gives them the knowledge that it is okay to succeed. Finally, and more tangibly, it gives Maori an escape from the cycle of poverty that many of them fall into where they are likely to have children before their eighteenth birthday. If Maori have qualifications, they will be more likely to succeed. If Maori succeed, then we no longer have an imbalance. When there is no longer an imbalance, there is no longer any necessity for the law. Finally, Maori are more likely to succeed at Uni as the teaching is more conducive to the traditional Maori learning style. It should be easier for Maori to get into Uni, because it's harder for them to attain the standards necessary at the moment. Adjusting the balance is the only way to attain some kind of equality.