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## Getting comfortable with Māori cultural practices

Worry about performing a waiata or pronouncing your marae hosts names correctly could be a thing of the past for people who enrol in a new Victoria University course teaching Māori cultural practices for professionals.

The course prepares students to enter the workforce with the knowledge and skills to engage with the Māori world and Māori stakeholders says the Head of School for Te Kawa a Māui - School of Māori Studies, Associate Professor Peter Addis.

“This is a competency that employers are increasingly looking for, particularly in Wellington which is the seat of Government.

“We have many courses available that examine Māori cultural practices but relatively few that bring together the various strands of language and culture for beginners that will be in this course,” says Mr Addis.

“Not understanding cultural practices is often the thing that makes people feel reluctant and anxious about participating in Māori events.”



The course will be held on Te Herenga Waka Marae at Victoria’s Kelburn Campus allowing students to “learn on the job”, says Mr Addis.

Students will be taught to perform and respond to Maori greetings, take part in pōhiri, perform a mihi, karakia and range of waiata, and know the difference between correctly and incorrectly pronounced Māori words.

Importantly, says Mr Addis, they will also examine the role and place of the Treaty of Waitangi in workplace situations and deal with Treaty questions that are commonly asked in job interviews.

All staff in Victoria’s Te Kawa a Māui will contribute to the course, giving students access to a range of specialisations and tribal connections. Mr Addis says the course will also provide a non-threatening environment where students can ask questions and bring up issues they would like to debate.

“Overall, it’s about increasing people’s confidence to engage with things Māori—especially in the workplace,” he says.

The inaugural course will be taught from December 2013–February 2014, but from next year it will be offered in Trimester Two, which runs from July to November.

To find out more about the course, visit: [www.victoria.ac.nz/maori/study/courses/maor-125](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/maori/study/courses/maor-125)

**For more information, please contact Peter Adds, Head of School, Te Kawa a Māui, on 04 463 5158 or [peter.adds@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:peter.adds@vuw.ac.nz)**

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