Te Herenga Waka — Victoria University of Wellington Blue Awards Criteria

The University Blue Award is one of New Zealand's most prestigious and long-standing awards. It recognises a university student's sporting performance in representing their region and/or New Zealand, whilst successfully progressing their academic studies.

Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington Sports Awards were added into the Blue Awards programme in 2018 to provide a platform for the University to celebrate the success of its sporting clubs, alongside the traditional, individual Blue awards.

Eligibility

Every person nominated for a Victoria University of Wellington Blue Award must meet the following criteria;

a. Be a student at, or have graduated from, Victoria University of Wellington during the 2025 academic year
b. Have paid required university fees
c. Between Trimester Two 2025 and Trimester One 2026 (inclusive), must have enrolled in a programme of study of courses worth at least 30 points with an overall grade average of at least a 'C', or a GPA of at least 2.

Process

1.	Nominators complete and submit one of three nomination forms; - *Blue Award for Sports* - *Blue and Sports Awards for Administration and Coaching* - *University Sports Club Awards* Nominations are accepted between June 23 – August 17.
2.	The panel meets and assesses all nominations to determine whether a Blue is awarded.
3.	From the pool of Blue Awards recipients, the panel selects winners of the;
4.	From the pool of Blue Awards recipients, the panel selects winners of the Premier Blue Awards; Sportsman of the Year; Sportswoman of the Year; Disabled Sportsperson of the Year; Māori Sportsperson of the Year; Pasifika Sportsperson of the Year. From the Premier Blue Award recipients, the panel selects the overall Sportsperson of the Year.
5.	From the Coaching and Club nominations, the panel determines 3-4 finalists and an overall winner for each category Premier Sports Awards – 'Coach of the Year' and 'Sports Club of the Year' and 'Sporting and Academic Excellence award.'

Overview of Awards

Blue Awards for Sport and Administration are awarded as per the criteria outlined in this document. From this pool of recipients, the Premier Blue Award winners are chosen.

From the Sports Clubs and Sports Coach nominations, 3-4 finalists are selected as per the criteria outlined in this document. From this group of finalists, the Premier Sports Award winners are chosen.

Blue Awards	University Sports Awards
Blue Award for Sport	Sports Club Finalists
Blue Award for Administration	Sports Coach Finalists

Premier Blue Awards	Premier Sports Awards
Sports Administrator of the Year	Sports Club of the Year
Sportsman of the Year	Sports Coach of the Year
Sportswoman of the Year	Sporting and Academic Excellence award
Disabled Sportsperson of the Year	
Māori Sportsperson of the Year	
Pasifika Sportsperson of the Year	
Sportsperson of the Year*	

*Sportsman of the Year, Sportswoman of the Year, Disabled Sportsperson of the Year, Māori Sportsperson of the Year and Pasifika Sportsperson of the Year are the finalists for this award.

NB. Some categories may not be awarded in a given year if the calibre of nominations is not deemed high enough by the panel.

Blue Awards

To achieve a Blue, students must have demonstrated a level or standard of sporting achievement that the panel identify as being appropriate (as per the criteria), as well as the following being taken into consideration where possible;

- Sportsmanship, general character and conduct of the nominee alongside the enthusiasm, interest and involvement for the sport in a University context
- The general standard of each sport at the University for that year and the number of Blue awards for that particular sport in the past.
- The panel will consider adequate context (injury, illness, absence etc.) when assessing nominations.
- For sports that do not immediately fit the criteria of achievement, the panel can determine the equivalent standard.
- Reaching these criteria does not automatically ensure the recommendation of a Blue by the panel.
- Sports will be considered as defined by Sport New Zealand.
- Level of performance may be determined by National Sporting Organisation of that sport if required.
- Neither representation of the University at a UTSNZ or New Zealand Universities Tournament nor the award of Blue in previous years shall mean the automatic award of a Blue for the current year.

When assessing nominees for a Blue, the following will also be considered:

- The scale, standard, and level of competition of the sport nominated for within New Zealand, in consultation with the Victoria University of Wellington club and/or the National Sport Organisation.
- The general standard of that sport at Victoria University of Wellington for the year.
- The nominee's level of excellence and adequate representation of Victoria University of Wellington in the sport; except where adequate reasons are provided as to why they are not playing for the University (such as the level of competition available to them within the Victoria University of Wellington club).

Blue Awards Criteria

1. Every person nominated for a Blue (except in debating) should over the last 12 months (*Between Trimester Two 2025 and Trimester One 2026*) meet at least;
    - one standard in Part A or
    - two standards in Part B.

    NB. For sports that do not immediately fit these criteria, the panel will determine a suitable, equivalent standard.

2. Every person nominated for a Blue in debating should, over the last 12 months (*Between Trimester Two 2025 and Trimester One 2026*) have achieved at least two standards in Part C.

    Note: reaching these criteria does not automatically ensure the awarding of a Blue by the panel. Notwithstanding the above criteria, final selection of nominees shall be decided by the panel.

Part A | *Nominee should meet at least one of the following standards*	
1	Formal selection for representation of a New Zealand, New Zealand age-group, NZ Māori or NZ Māori age group team (other nations to be considered by the panel)
2	Formal selection for representation of a senior or premier regional team or regional franchise team (Where the volume and quality of sporting competition within the region is high). NB. An age group regional team would not normally qualify.
3	Formal selection for a New Zealand Universities team (only where further competition applies; this does not include tournament team selections).

Part B | *Nominee should meet at least two of the following standards*	
1	Top 8 placing in a New Zealand open individual or pairs event
2	Top 4 placing in a New Zealand age-group individual or pairs event
3	Top 4 placing in a regional open individual or pairs event
4	Top 10 ranking in New Zealand (open grade)
5	Top 5 ranking in New Zealand (age grade)
6	Top 6 ranking in Wellington (open grade)
7	Competed in a national inter-club competition for a team which placed in the top 3
8	Formal selection (not by the club itself) for a recognised international competition
9	Other exceptional status recommended by the National Sport Organisation

Part C | Debating | ***Nominee should meet at least two of the following standards***	
1	Finalist in the NZ Impromptu Debating Tournament (Officer's Cup)
2	Finalist in the NZ Universities Limited Preparation Debating Tournament (Joynt Scroll)
3	Winner of the Vice-Chancellor's Cup (New Zealand British Parliamentary Open Debating Champs)
4	Top 3 speaker at a NZ Impromptu Debating Tournament (Officer's Cup)
5	Top 3 speaker at a NZ Universities Limited Preparation Debating Tournament (Joynt Scroll)
6	Winner of the David Lange Cup (Best speaker at New Zealand British Parliamentary Open Debating Champs)
7	Reached the knockout finals series of a World Universities Debating Championships and/or shall have been placed in the top 10 of individual speakers at the competition.
8	Reached the knockout finals series of an Australasian Intervarsity Debating Championship (Including the Australasian women's debating championship for the avoidance of doubt) and/or shall have been placed in the top 10 of individual speakers at that competition.

Premier Blue Awards

Sports Administrator of the Year

Sports Administrator of the Year is awarded to a club volunteer who devotes their time and energy to facilitating the enjoyment and achievement of others. The panel's decisions will be based on the following:

1. Achievements and contributions made while within a voluntary position/s he or she has held within the University club (executive, administrator, coach, official, event manager etc.)
2. Qualifications gained for administration, coaching, officiating, event management or other relevant areas
3. How the nominee has influenced;
    - Club growth – membership and volunteer numbers, financial situation and/or capital acquisitions
    - Club development – competitive successes, activities at the University and within the Wellington community, business relationships and sponsorships, and/or organisational improvements
    - Other reasons including examples of good sporting behaviour.

Sportsman and Sportswoman of the Year

These are awarded to the students who, in the opinion of the Panel, have achieved the highest level of excellence in university sport, with the minimum requirement of a current Blue Award.

Disabled Sportsperson of the Year

This is awarded to the student(s) who, in the opinion of the Panel, has achieved the highest level of excellence in university sport as a disabled sportsperson, with the minimum requirement of a current Blue Award.

Māori Sportsperson of the Year

The taonga is presented to the student who is judged to have best represented Māoridom through his or her performance in top level sport. It is awarded to a student(s) of Māori descent who, in the opinion of the Panel, has achieved excellence in university sport, with the minimum requirement of a current Blue Award.

Pasifika Sportsperson of the Year

This award was established in 2015 and is presented to the student who has excelled in sport and has served his or her family and community with pride, dignity and integrity. It is awarded to a student(s) of Pasifika descent who, in the opinion of the Panel, has achieved excellence in university sport, with the minimum requirement of a current Blue Award.

Sportsperson of the Year

The Victoria University of Wellington Sportsperson of the Year award has been in existence since 1965 when the Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association received from an anonymous donor, a trophy to be awarded annually. It is awarded to the student(s) who, in the opinion of the Panel, has achieved the highest level of excellence in university sport, with the minimum requirement of a current Blue Award.

Premier Sports Awards

Coach of the Year

Coach of the Year is awarded to a student-coach who has inspired athletes to achieve outstanding results or progress in the last year. The coach must be a currently enrolled student at Victoria University of Wellington.

The panel aims to select 3-4 finalists and one overall winner, with decisions based on the following:

- Their contribution to the success of a team/group or individual
- What team and/or individual they coach/ed
- The competition (who was involved, volume and quality of competition)
- Contribution to team/group culture or individual morale
- Achievement of or progress towards coaching qualifications

Sports Club of the Year

Sports Club of the Year recognises the most outstanding sports club and rewards exceptional contribution to the student experience. The following criteria must be met;

a. Every club considered for the Sports Club of the Year Award must be registered with Victoria University for the 2020 academic year.
b. Every club considered for the Sports Club of the Year award must have a membership base consisting of at least 50 percent students at Victoria University of Wellington

The panel aims to select 3-4 finalists and one overall winner, with decisions based on the following:

- Where the sport is competitive, the performance of teams in relation to the strength of that sport
- The performance of the club over the last 12 months in comparison to the club's performance over previous years
- Club engagement and contribution to the university community
- Club opportunities, initiatives and services offered to members
- How the opportunities, initiatives and services are different from previous years
- How many students have benefitted from the club, including membership growth
- How the club has improved the overall student experience
- Any other consideration that the panel identifies as relevant

Sporting and Academic Excellence award
presented by Te Hau Kori—the Centre for Physical Activity and Wellbeing

The purpose of this award is to recognise an outstanding student who maintains excellence in both sport and in study. It is important our high-performing athletes maintain academic standards alongside their sporting pursuits, and this award highlights the successful bridging of the two aspects of the student-athlete life. It is awarded to the Blue Award recipient with the highest-grade point average in a given year with the minimum requirement of a current Blue Award.

Additionally, the recipient of this award will be offered a master or undergraduate level single course scholarship which covers tuition fees, student hardship and student services fees worth up to $2,800 to study in the following year.

Te Hau Kori will meet with the student after awards evening to discuss course of choice.