

Reform of Vocational Education

What the Government's proposals would mean for international education

Thank you for taking an interest in the proposed Reform of Vocational Education. We want to hear your views on these proposals. The changes we propose are complex. To get them right, we need the detailed knowledge and the different perspectives of all people interested in vocational education in New Zealand.

This fact sheet is a companion document to the *Reform of Vocational Education* consultation discussion document, which is published here: <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/reform-of-vocational-education/>. The fact sheet provides specific information on what the proposed reforms would mean for international education. It is aimed at providers, current and prospective international students, and others with an interest in international education.

International students can feel confident to enrol in vocational education in 2019

International students can go ahead and enrol in vocational education courses in 2019, confident that the system will support you to proceed with your study throughout any future change process. Any approved visas and study arrangements will continue, and the courses and qualifications you are enrolled in will continue to be recognised.

The proposals in this document may go ahead in this or another form, but the Government won't make any decisions until we have heard and carefully considered feedback from this consultation process. Even if the changes go ahead as currently envisaged, you should not notice any major changes to how the system operates in 2019. Education providers and Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) would be gearing up for transformation, but it would be "business as usual" for their delivery to and support of learners. Ensuring all learners can complete their study as planned – during 2019 and beyond – will be a top priority throughout any change process, including for international students on multi-year visas.

More information on what the proposed reforms would mean for learners is available here:

<https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/reform-of-vocational-education/>.

A vision for NZ

A strong, unified vocational education system that is sustainable and fit for the future of work, delivering what learners, employers and communities need to be successful.

Have your say

The government is seeking feedback on the proposals for the Reform of Vocational Education by Wednesday 27 March 2019. The link above will also take you to our online survey where you can respond to the questions posed and more.

You can also provide feedback by attending a face-to-face consultation event. Details on these events are available at <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/reform-of-vocational-education/>

What should those involved in international education understand about the proposed changes?

Why are changes being proposed?

International education makes an important contribution to New Zealand. The New Zealand Government has committed to a 12-year International Education Strategy 2018-2030 with a vision of creating an environment where international education can thrive and provide economic, social and cultural benefits for all New Zealand.

There is wide recognition of the social, cultural and economic benefits that international students bring to New Zealand. International students make a huge contribution to the richness and diversity of New Zealand's society and culture, and bring valuable global connections and perspectives with them. These yield social and economic benefits not just while the students are studying, but also after they graduate and return home or engage in skilled work in New Zealand.

New Zealand has a deservedly great reputation as a high-quality, safe and caring country for international students to study, live and work.

Students need to continue to see New Zealand's vocational education system as robust and sustainable, delivering education that develops the contemporary skills sought by employers. Competition for international students is intense, and the system needs to be agile and responsive to maintain and strengthen our standing on the world stage.

Specifics of the proposals for international education

A New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology to replace all 16 existing ITPs in New Zealand

The Government proposes to create a new New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology, bringing together all 16 existing institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs) to offer high-quality vocational education throughout New Zealand. The creation of a new institution will allow greater and faster improvements, compared to continuing with ad-hoc mergers of competing ITPs across New Zealand, as individual institutions run into financial difficulties.

The New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology would also continue to deliver to international students, both onshore and offshore. International students in vocational education make a significant economic and cultural contribution to New Zealand's regions. The new institution should have the size, scale and expertise to significantly improve its visibility and impact in the international market, and share more of the benefits of international education with our regions.

Alongside its vocational delivery, the New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology would continue to deliver foundation education, non-vocational certificate and diploma delivery (eg, te reo and tikanga Māori provision) and degree and postgraduate education as ITPs currently do.

Each region would have a Regional Leadership Group to advise the Institute's "national office" and the TEC on local skills, to link with local and regional development strategies, and to advise on what mix of courses should be offered in that region. Part of the role of the Regional Leadership Group could be identifying how the regional campus can work to identify future labour demand needs for the region, and how these could be addressed through upskilling both our domestic and international student market.

The "New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology" is a working name, and we are interested in your feedback on the name. The Government would like the New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology to be in operation from 1 January 2020. The process of transformation would be phased to ensure minimal disruption to learners.

Collaboration through Centres of Vocational Excellence

The Government envisages that the New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology, and perhaps also wānanga, would host Centres of Vocational Excellence focused on teaching and learning, and possibly applied research, in areas of study of particular importance to New Zealand.

Centres of Vocational Excellence would cover key sectors and industries, which could be broad (eg, agriculture) or specific (eg, viticulture). They could potentially also cover key types of educational delivery or activity, for example kaupapa Māori delivery.

We envision these would be located across the country, including in regional New Zealand.

Centres of Vocational Excellence would bring together a critical mass of knowledge and expertise in their areas, helping drive innovation and lift quality, and improve links to industries and communities.

Education providers supporting workplace learning and assessment

The Government is proposing that providers would take on the role of supporting workplace learning and assessment that is currently done by ITOs.

New “Industry Skills Bodies” would extend the leadership role of industry and employers across all vocational education, including provider-based vocational education. They would also provide industry with a purchase role across all vocational education, through advice to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), which TEC must give regard to.

Providers would be responsible for delivering and supporting all vocational education and training, whether it took place at a provider’s facilities on campus or in a workplace. They would take responsibility for approximately 140,000 trainees and apprentices in addition to the approximately 110,000 vocational education learners they already serve (based on 2017 Ministry of Education figures). This would require increased capability and capacity.

What do the proposals mean for international education?

The purpose of the proposed Reform of Vocational Education is to enable a stronger, unified, sustainable vocational education system that delivers the skills that learners, employers and communities need to be successful.

The proposals in this document would significantly bolster New Zealand’s standing in the international market – especially the proposal to create a single high-quality New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology. A new institution of this kind would represent a great value proposition for international students, and due to its size and scale should be able to achieve a much higher level of visibility in international markets.

Though no decisions have yet been made, it is possible that students enrolled in ITP courses that finish in 2020 or later would have their qualification awarded by a different institution than the one they enrolled in (i.e. the proposed New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology, rather than the ITP where they first enrolled). The Government would consult separately with learners on how best to reflect these changes on their Record of Achievement and other documents.

The Government’s proposed changes to vocational education are primarily structural and would produce a better system for students. The proposals are intended to allow learners, including international students, to study for qualifications delivered consistently throughout New Zealand, with greater assurance that they meet industry-approved standards, and with better quality teaching and learning support.

The Government also wants to ensure New Zealand vocational education continues to be globally relevant as the nature of work and the skills required in the workplace changes.

How would these proposals impact education agents and overseas institutional partners?

We recommend that agents continue to engage with existing contacts within ITPs. Existing agent agreements should continue as normal, and agents should continue to promote New Zealand, including New Zealand ITPs, as a world-class education destination.

We encourage all parties to use the information in this fact sheet and the larger discussion document to communicate about the proposed changes.

Overseas institutions currently collaborating with New Zealand ITPs would remain partners of the proposed New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology, which would be likely to work to ensure that these relationships remain strong throughout any transition period.

Once decisions are made about the form and functions of the new NZ Institute of Skills & Technology, further information will be made available.

What happens after I provide feedback?

We expect that many people will be interested in having a say on the future of vocational education in New Zealand. Everyone's feedback is welcome. We'll carefully consider what we've heard in engagement meetings, along with the feedback sent in to the survey, email address and phone line. The Minister and Cabinet will receive a summary of all the feedback, which will inform their decisions about the Reform of Vocational Education. You can expect to hear about these decisions around mid-2019. We'll also continue to draw on feedback and ask for more conversations as we work through how to implement the Government's decisions.

Are you looking for more detail?

Technical discussion documents that go into greater detail on the specifics of the proposals are available at <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/reform-of-vocational-education/>. Questions on the details are available on the technical discussion documents and online when you indicate that you wish to provide specific feedback to the following topics:

- » Proposal on roles of providers and industry bodies
- » Proposal on a single New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology
- » Proposal on a unified funding system