

Reform of Vocational Education

What the Government's proposals mean for secondary schools

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

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/>. It provides additional information on what the proposed reforms would mean for secondary schools.

More specific consideration of secondary-tertiary learning is being made alongside the NCEA review. You can find out more about the NCEA review at: <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/ncea-have-your-say>

What should schools understand about the proposals?

Why are changes being proposed?

At the heart of the Government's reform of vocational education is a goal to ensure that the needs of learners, employers and communities drive the system, to help us raise living standards for everyone in New Zealand. We want a system that truly delivers to the regions of New Zealand, and our proposals will help to ensure that there is greater availability of provision throughout New Zealand.

We need a vocational education system that delivers to the needs of all learners. The current system persistently under-serves some learner groups, including Pacific learners. We need to ensure that all learners can access and succeed in a vocational education system that responds to their needs.

This Government has taken action to address various immediate issues with skills supply in New Zealand, such as through the Construction Skills Action Plan, and by investing funds to address financial viability issues in institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs). This work is important, but more fundamental change is needed if our vocational education system is to meet New Zealand's long-term needs.

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/>

Key changes

- » Better connections between industry, tertiary providers, and schools
- » A New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology for consistently high-quality vocational education throughout New Zealand
- » Easier for learners to move between work-based and off-job study

The Government can't continue tinkering at the edges, or adding more layers of complexity and "Band-Aid solutions" to an already complex system. These problems call for decisive action to safeguard New Zealand's skills pipeline and economic development for the future. These issues with our current system are holding New Zealand back, and some groups bear the costs much more than others. New Zealand deserves better.

Specifics of the proposals for schools

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 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.

A dedicated organisational charter in the legislation would set out the purpose and functions of the institution, including specific obligations to ensure it was responding to the needs and aspirations of regional New Zealand and of Māori as tangata whenua.

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.

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.

Redefined roles for industry bodies and education providers

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

Workplace learning would become part of the core business of vocational education providers, putting them in day-to-day contact with employers. Over time, programmes that integrate structured learning with the workplace would become the norm, making it easy for learners to transfer between providers and between on-job and off-job training throughout their programme of study. More vocational education could resemble apprenticeships, with education providers and employers working together to help a learner meet industry skill standards via a mix of work-based

learning occurring in the course of doing a job, and structured learning supported by a provider off-job where needed – regardless of whether the learner is employed.

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.

A unified vocational education funding system

The proposed changes above would need to be supported by a new funding system. Creating one funding system for vocational education would ensure learners get the skills, experience and support they need to be successful, providers have the funding they need to be sustainable and to support our regions, and Industry Skills Bodies can fulfil their roles.

What would be the impacts on secondary schools?

Current collaboration and pathways between schools and tertiary education would continue, and be enhanced, by the proposed reform of vocational education. In particular, Trades Academies and Gateway are not being reviewed as part of the vocational education proposals. Opportunities for strengthening secondary-tertiary learning are being considered through the NCEA review. We expect that funding allocations for these programmes for 2020 will be made in 2019 as usual.

Under the Government's proposal, schools that currently have a relationship with their local ITP, such as through a Trades Academy, would instead work with the local campus of the New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology. The specific impact on schools would differ depending on whether the local ITP was a Trades Academy Lead Provider or a partner provider of a school-led programme.

If your school works or partners with a regional ITP, you should continue to do so. The proposed reforms aim to maintain and expand, rather than reduce or withdraw from, education and training activity in the regions. You can continue to build and maintain enduring and highly valuable relationships with ITPs.

Some schools currently work with ITOs in their role of supporting workplace learning and assessment, such as through Gateway or Trades Academies. This role would transition to tertiary providers, along with responsibilities for apprentices and trainees.

The proposed Regional Leadership Committees would enable more joined-up planning at the regional level, so vocational education at all levels, and foundation skills delivered by secondary schools, meet local and regional needs. These committees could play multiple roles in their region, so it may take some time for the right regional structure to become clear.

The connections between vocational education standards and the NCEA are not directly affected by the proposals. Under the proposed changes, schools would use skill standards set by Industry Skills Bodies in the same way as they currently use ITO Unit Standards. Government is also considering where there are opportunities to strengthen the coherence and credibility of NCEA as part of the NCEA review.

What would be the impacts on secondary school students?

Programmes that combine secondary school and tertiary education, such as Trades Academies, Gateway, and STAR, will be “business as usual” in 2019 and will continue in 2020.

Students planning to progress from secondary school to a tertiary provider or in industry training in the rest of 2019, or in 2020, can continue to do so, confident that the system will support them to proceed with their study throughout any future change process.

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 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.

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

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

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 that is sent in to the survey, email address and phone line. The Minister and Cabinet will receive a summary of all the feedback and it 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 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 new roles for providers and industry bodies
- » Proposal on a new Institute of Skills & Technology
- » Proposal on a unified funding system