

What the Reform of Vocational Education means for Pacific learners

The Government has announced its plan to create a strong and sustainable vocational education system. It will help improve the skills of all New Zealanders no matter what their background or where they are in their education or career, and will support a growing economy.

The world of work is changing significantly, and vocational education needs to adapt to stay ahead of these changes. A unified, strong vocational education system will help improve wellbeing for all New Zealanders and support a growing economy that works for everyone.

All regions deserve to be backed to succeed. We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create a system that enables regional training and education that has a nationally consistent strategic direction and adapts to suit the jobs of today and the future. Your input into the design of the new system is vitally important and this will continue throughout this change.

One vocational education system will:

give all learners the education and training they need for the workplace

prioritise learners the system currently doesn't serve well, especially Māori, Pacific peoples, disabled people and people with low levels of previous education

give employers greater access to a skilled, work-ready workforce across all regions of New Zealand

give industry the lead in ensuring New Zealand's workforce is fit for today's needs and tomorrow's expectations

ensure all the regions of New Zealand have collaborative, flexible, innovative and sustainable providers

build on New Zealand's reputation internationally as a great place to study

be culturally responsive to learners at work and on campus, particularly to Māori and Pacific peoples

help young people more easily transition from secondary school to good jobs with training or to high-quality and relevant online or on-campus learning

What this means for you

- » For now, the reforms won't change anything for you.
- » The reforms will take time and the transition will be carefully managed.
- » You can enrol in vocational education and training as you normally would, including in multi-year programmes.
- » You'll be able to continue to study uninterrupted.
- » In the future, there will be many improvements in your learning experience, including:
 - increased stability for the sector
 - pathways that are easier to understand and navigate as you plan to learn new skills, retrain or upskill for work
 - more access to high-quality on-the-job learning and employer networks in addition to off-the-job study
 - the ability to move between on-the-job and off-the-job training and online study, and transfer to another region in New Zealand more easily.

support all people to continue employment by ensuring they always have the new, relevant skills that employers need through retraining, upskilling and reskilling

help whānau by ensuring that everyone in the family who is able to earn can, even while they continue learning new skills to help them advance into more rewarding jobs.

What the Government has decided

The Reform of Vocational Education will allow learners to study for qualifications delivered throughout New Zealand, with greater assurance that they meet industry-approved standards, and with high-quality teaching and learning support.

The main changes the Minister of Education announced on 1 August 2019 are:

1. *Create Workforce Development Councils (WDCs)*: Around four to seven industry-governed bodies, to give industry greater leadership across vocational education.
2. *Establish Regional Skills Leadership Groups (RSLGs)*: RSLGs would provide advice about the skills needs of their regions to the Tertiary Education Commission, WDCs, and local vocational education providers.
3. *Establish Te Taumata Aronui*: A group to help ensure that the Reform of Vocational Education reflects the Government's commitment to Māori-Crown partnerships.
4. *Create a New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology (the Institute)*: A unified, sustainable, public network of regionally accessible vocational education, bringing together the existing 16 institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs).
5. *Shift the role of supporting on-the-job learning from industry training organisations (ITOs) to providers*: The Institute and other providers would support on-the-job training like apprenticeships and traineeships as well as providing education and training in off-the-job settings, to achieve seamless integration between the settings and to be well-connected with the needs of industry.
6. *Establish Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs)*: CoVEs will bring together the Institute, other providers, WDCs, industry experts, and leading researchers to grow excellent vocational education provision and share high-quality curriculum and programme design across the system.
7. *Unify the vocational education funding system*: A unified funding system will apply to all provider-based and work-integrated education at certificate and diploma qualification levels 3 to 7 (excluding degree study) and all industry training.

What does this mean for you?

The reforms will take time and during the transition we'll work to make sure the new system is inclusive of Pacific peoples and learners from all backgrounds. You can continue to enrol in vocational education and training and study as you normally would, including in multi-year programmes. You'll be able to continue your study uninterrupted and, going forward, you may start hearing about how Pacific people will be better served by the system.

Fees Free tertiary education, along with financial support available through StudyLink, will continue.

In the future, there will be many improvements in your learning experience. The more integrated system will better suit Pacific learners, their families and communities, who told us during the consultation on the reforms that they prefer to work and earn money to support their family, rather than studying full time.

More education-to-employment arrangements will be available that recognise the vital role communities play in supporting Pacific learner success and provide opportunities to tailor support for learners by those with skills, knowledge and understanding of Pacific values and cultures.

The new system will build on what is currently working well for Pacific learners and the new funding system will also encourage vocational education organisations to focus on the needs of Pacific peoples.

The vocational education changes will mean increased stability for institutes of technology and polytechnics across all parts of New Zealand. Pathways will be easier to access, navigate and understand as you seek to learn new skills, retrain or upskill for work.

As a learner, workplace trainee or apprentice, you will have more access to high quality on-the-job learning and employer networks in addition to on-campus study. You'll be able to move between on-the-job, off-the-job, and online study, and transfer to another region in New Zealand more easily.

What's next?

A stakeholder advisory group will be formed to help ensure best practice in ongoing engagement with stakeholders, including Pacific learners, their families and communities, to help shape the ongoing development of the new vocational education system.

If you'd like us to keep you up to date directly, please sign up for more information and we'll send you regular updates, information about the progression of the changes, and how you can get involved as things progress.

[Sign up to our newsletter update.](#)

For more information on the Reform of Vocational Education, and the full series of factsheets, including the 'What the Reform of Vocational Education means for students' factsheet, please visit [Kōrero Mātauranga – the Education Conversation.](#)