

What the Reform of Vocational Education means for international students

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 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.

The reforms will build on New Zealand's already strong reputation as a high-quality, safe and caring country for international students to study, live and work.

One vocational education system will:

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

prioritise learners who 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

What this means for your international students

- » Any approved visas and study arrangements will remain.
- » Your students can continue their study uninterrupted.
- » Your students' wellbeing will remain a priority and pastoral care won't be impacted by these changes.
- » Your students are encouraged to continue with plans to enrol in institutes of technology and polytechnics in 2019 and 2020, including in multi-year programmes.
- » Your students' qualifications will be awarded to them from your current institution and your existing brand.
- » Your students will have better access to high quality learning and employer networks.
- » There will be clearer and more direct pathways for international secondary students to progress to higher-level vocational education and training.

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

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 your students?

The reforms will take time and we'll keep everyone informed during the transition process. Existing programmes, qualifications and credentials will remain and will continue to be recognised internationally.

All prospective students should continue with plans to enrol in institutes of technology and polytechnics in 2019 and 2020 as they normally would, including in multi-year programmes. They will be able to continue their study uninterrupted.

International student wellbeing will remain a priority and pastoral care provision won't be impacted by these changes.

For students enrolling in institutes of technology and polytechnics, when they complete their qualification or credential in the next few years, it will be awarded by their current institution and that institution's existing brand.

Student visas

Any approved visas and study arrangements will remain. Work is underway to ensure the visa status of international learners in institutes of technology and polytechnics will be transitioned over to the new Institute when it is established without additional administrative or financial burden.

What's next?

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, please visit [Kōrero Mātauranga – the Education Conversation.](#)