

What the Reform of Vocational Education means for learners with disabilities

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.

How the changes will support you

The Government's reforms are an opportunity to set up a new system that works with disabled people learners and people with additional learning support needs. We are shifting to more responsive teaching and learning, where you and all learners know you are valued.

You will benefit from an integrated vocational education system, with more exposure to workplaces and employer networks. You will be better supported during transitions between in-class and workplace learning.

In the future, these are some of the improvements you will experience in the new system:

- » The ability to move between on-the-job and off-the-job learning and online study, and transfer to another region in New Zealand more easily.
- » More access to high-quality workplace learning and employer networks in addition to off-the-job study.
- » Pathways that are easier to understand and navigate as you seek to learn new skills, retrain or upskill for work.
- » More flexible learning opportunities so you can earn while you learn.

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 additional learning support needs

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

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 learners with disabilities and learners from all backgrounds.

If you are already studying, nothing will change in 2019. You will be able to continue your current studies uninterrupted or enrol in training programmes, including in multi-year programmes.

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

In the future, there will be a lot of improvements in your learning experience. You will benefit from an integrated vocational education system, where learners studying at an education provider will have more exposure to workplaces and employer networks and will be better supported during transitions between in-class and workplace learning. This will help address issues of unequal access to employer networks for disabled learners and assist during transitional periods (both into study and employment).

The new system 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 workplace learning and employer networks in addition to off-the-job learning. 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 provide officials with insights from stakeholders in vocational education, to inform design and implementation work during the transition to the new system. This group will include the perspectives of people with disabilities and people with additional learning support needs.

If you'd like us to keep you up to date directly, please sign up for more information and we will 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.](#)