
Busting myths on the Reform of Vocational Education for employers

by Fiona Kingsford, Competenz CEO

What is the Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE) all about and how does it affect my business?

What do I need to know as an employer?

The Government has committed to ongoing support of apprentices and trainees undertaking on-the-job training. There is absolutely no reason for employers to stop signing their employees into training for fear apprentices and trainees won't be able to complete because of upcoming changes. All qualifications remain, and everyone entering one will be able to complete it.

Busting the myths for employers

Changes to the vocational education sector were announced by the Government on 01 August 2019. You can find out more about these changes at tec.govt/rove. They will be introduced over the next three years, however, a lot of myths have surfaced that are not true and need to be addressed.

Myth 1 – There's no point in signing up an apprentice or trainee now, as they won't be able to finish their qualification: This is absolutely false. All qualifications remain, and everyone entering one will be able to complete it.

Myth 2 – Competenz isn't going to exist, so no point signing up with them: While Competenz will be disestablished sometime before December 2022, this myth also implies that an apprentice or trainee won't be able to complete if they sign with Competenz now. This is simply not true – the only difference you might experience is your training advisor or account manager may be wearing a different shirt one day. So ignore anything that says otherwise, if you are thinking of signing up a trainee or apprentice please don't hesitate!

Myth 3 – The “mega-poly” will replace on-the-job learning with classroom learning: While this may be a natural assumption (as polytechs predominantly undertake classroom learning), it is not correct. The NZIST is not a “mega poly”, but a new national entity with an extensive network of campuses, responsible for all vocational learning be it on-the-job, off-the-job or distance learning.

What will RoVE do?

On 01 August the Government announced seven key changes to create a unified vocational education system. It will disestablish the eleven industry training organisations (ITOs), of which Competenz is one, and replace them with two new entities:

1. A new national delivery agency referred to as the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST), to deliver all classroom, digital, and on-the-job learning. This includes a merger of the sixteen Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics and the arranging training functions of the ITOs.
2. Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) with a powerful oversight role, responsible for leading the development of qualifications, standard setting, skills leadership, brokerage and industry advocacy. They won't be directly involved in running on-the-job training themselves. The WDC functions and the arranging of on-job training are currently ITO activities.

These changes will be progressively implemented by December 2022. Right now there is no change to Competenz or to the support that we provide you or your trainees and apprentices.

Where do I find out more?

You can talk to your local Competenz training advisor or account manager, go to competenz.org.nz/reform-of-vocational-education or tec.govt.nz, or email VET@competenz.org.nz or RoVE@tec.govt.nz