

What the Reform of Vocational Education means for trainees and apprentices

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.

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.
- » Your industry training organisation or polytechnic will continue to support you and your employer, award credit, and issue qualifications.
- » At some point before the end of 2022, support for your training will come from a different organisation.
- » In the future, the system will be easier to understand and navigate.
- » You'll be able to easily move between on-the-job, off-the-job learning and online study.
- » You'll be able to transfer to another region in New Zealand more easily.
- » Learners who previously had difficulty in school will find that the system welcomes them and supports their unique needs.
- » Remotely located learners will find greater access to vocational education and employment opportunities.
- » The system will be fit for the future so you can upskill or retrain throughout your working life.

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 we'll work closely with education providers and industry organisations to manage the transition.

In the short term, the reforms won't change anything for apprentices and trainees, as you'll continue to be supported by ITOs to gain industry qualifications.

Over the next three years, a carefully managed transition will shift the responsibility for supporting you, if you are still in training, to an education provider. The transition will be overseen by your ITO and your employer. You'll still be able to complete your training and be awarded an industry qualification. Your training agreement with your employer will continue.

During this process you'll be kept informed, well-supported and looked after and will be helped to continue your learning uninterrupted. As the new system rolls out, education and training pathways will be easier to understand and navigate as you, as a learner, seek new skills, or want to retrain or upskill for your employment.

Learners, on-the-job trainees and apprentices will have better access to high-quality learning and to the education provider's employer network. You'll also be able to move between on-the-job, off-the-job learning, and online study. If you move to another region in New Zealand, your training will continue without disruption.

There will be a stronger focus on the groups that have been traditionally underserved by the education system if you're a Māori, Pacific or disabled learner. There will be more learning options that are better suited to your needs. Learners who had difficulty in school previously will find that the system welcomes and supports them effectively. Remotely located learners will find greater access to vocational education and employment opportunities.

What's next?

We'll continue to work with ITOs and employers in the coming months to ensure you're supported throughout this process.

A stakeholder advisory group will be formed to help ensure best practice in ongoing engagement with stakeholders, including learners, 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. You can sign up through the following email address: RoVE@tec.govt.nz.

For more information on the Reform of Vocational Education, and the full series of factsheets, please visit [Kōrero Mātauranga – the Education Conversation](#).