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EDUCATION COUNCIL
NEW ZEALAND | Matatū Aotearoa

Dear colleagues

We want to thank everyone who made time to participate in an initial teacher education (ITE) design workshop, held in Wellington and Auckland last month. We appreciated the opportunity to discuss our proposals with you, as well as the energy and good will you brought to these conversations. As you know, the Education Council has a mandate to lift the status of the profession and to provide direction that will enable the profession to meet future aspirations. Recruitment, selection, initial teacher education and ongoing professional development are critical to achieving this. We look forward to working with you in an ongoing way as we shape the future profession together.

This letter summarises the main themes of feedback gathered from the workshops and emailed submissions, and updates you on next steps.

What did we hear from you?

On moving to a minimum level 8 qualification...

We are proposing a minimum level 8 qualification as the new benchmark for future entry to the profession. Feedback from the workshops suggests that many providers agree that this is a desirable goal - and that the indicators at level 8 on the New Zealand qualifications framework (NZQF) best align with the skill level we want from future teachers, such as inquiry-based practice and adaptive expertise skills.

While some providers support this proposal, especially in the university sector, not all providers agree. Some providers think that a postgraduate qualification should be aspirational, or a development option for teachers with several years' experience, rather than a requirement for registration.

The main concerns about moving to a minimum level 8 qualification are:

- the capability and capacity of some providers to shift provision to level 8 given the changes needed to meet staffing and research requirements - particularly for Māori medium and early childhood education (ECE) providers,
- longer qualifications may make ITE a less affordable option for some students and, if combined with higher entry requirements, could reduce student diversity,
- limited evidence about whether there are benefits for curriculum implementation in the ECE sector, and

EDUCATION COUNCIL OF AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Phone: 04 471 0852
Fax: 04 471 0870
www.educationcouncil.org.nz

Postal address
PO Box 5326
Wellington 6145
New Zealand

Physical address
Level 12, 80 Boulcott Street
Wellington 6011
New Zealand

- more teachers in the ECE sector may choose not to qualify due to the additional cost and study time, which could affect the supply of qualified ECE teachers.

On timeframes for implementing change...

We proposed moving to a minimum of level 8 for new programmes starting from 2019. Provider feedback indicates this timeframe is too tight, and that at least three years' lead-in time is required for institutions to develop new programmes and build post-graduate capability. The start of 2020 was suggested as the earliest possible date for implementation.

On maintaining a variety of pathways into teaching...

Providers strongly support retaining the flexibility to offer a range of pathways and programme models to cater for the wide variety of students attracted to ITE; from school leavers and older learners returning to study, to graduates.

While the Council is mandated to set the requirements for ITE programme approval, we agree that it is the role of ITE providers to shape programmes to best achieve learning outcomes for their students.

We discussed a range of possible future models in the workshops, including the potential to develop a three-year degree with an additional honours degree year (four years total). While some providers could see benefits in this model, others were concerned about alternative pathway options for those students who do not meet the academic prerequisites to gain entry to the honours year (usually a B+ average) that will exit unable to register as a teacher.

Some providers offering post-graduate qualifications recommended that future programmes are delivered over a minimum of 18 months so they are more sustainable and scalable for both providers and students (compared to one-year delivery models).

On flexible pathways across more than sector...

We proposed developing flexible programmes that enable teachers to work across more than one sector level, for example 0 to 8 years. Feedback suggests that many providers agree with the concept in principle, particularly if it helps to smooth the transition from early childhood centres to school. However, longer programmes would be required to allow students the time needed to meet the academic and practica requirements of each sector level. Several providers indicated that they currently offer similar programmes to students.

Future practica requirements - including an extended placement in the final year...

The main theme emerging from the discussion about future practica requirements is that the quality of a student's placement is more important than practica quantity or length. Providers are concerned that increasing the amount of practica time will increase student/provider costs, and place extra demands on partner schools and centres. This may be particularly true in areas where there is a limited pool of potential partners e.g. Māori medium schools.

Given the impact of increasing requirements on many players in the ITE system, providers believe it is important to be able to demonstrate that changing practica length will lead to better student teacher outcomes. To help build this evidence base, we will undertake a literature review in the new year.

On mentoring roles and qualifications...

Feedback from the workshops suggests that a co-ordinated approach is needed to lift the quality and number of mentor/associate teachers to better support ITE as well as the induction and mentoring of new teachers. There was strong support for greater recognition of the role of mentors in schools, and a call to increase remuneration and/or allocated time for this work.

Providers had mixed views about the value of developing mentor qualifications. Many providers were of the view that a mentor qualification should not be compulsory to attain.

Some providers indicated an interest in taking a greater role in supporting new teachers through induction and mentoring programmes - through formal and informal development opportunities.

On selection and entry...

In the workshops we asked providers to share their ITE entry and selection methods, and proposed the introduction of a national literacy and numeracy proficiency benchmark.

While the majority of providers do not support a national proficiency benchmark - they do support the current requirement to assess literacy and numeracy needs on entry to ITE as long as they retain the flexibility to determine how this is done. The main concern about introducing a national proficiency benchmark for entry is that it may result in providers turning away candidates otherwise well suited to a teaching career, particularly older students returning to study.

If a proficiency benchmark were introduced, most providers prefer that the assessment take place during the programme or on entry to the profession (rather than on entry to ITE). Alternatively, it was suggested that a proficiency benchmark could be introduced as a guideline rather than a requirement.

There was limited support for developing a national candidate selection tool to help select candidates with an appropriate disposition for a teaching career. If a tool was made available, providers prefer it to be optional and retain the flexibility to decide how best to use the results.

Other themes coming out of the workshop

A significant issue for ECE providers was that government does not require all teachers in the ECE sector to be qualified. ECE providers are concerned that lifting to a level 8 qualification will widen the gap between qualified and unqualified teachers, and incentivise centres to employ cheaper, unqualified teachers.

Providers also queried the current tertiary tuition funding rates, and suggested that they are reviewed in light of any changes in programme requirements.

Next steps

We will continue to gather feedback from providers and other key stakeholders over the next couple of months. We will also share your feedback with our partner education organisations and with the profession.

In the new year we will host a hui with Māori medium providers and Māori medium sector stakeholders to discuss ways to build capacity and capability and to learn more about their concerns. We will also be working with the Education Council's Māori Medium Advisory Group.

We will also be working with the Education Council's ECE Advisory Group to assist us to work on issues affecting the ECE sector, and we will meet with key representatives for the sector and employers.

Where to find more information

You can keep an eye on developments by visiting the ITE forum page on our [website](#). Our paper '*Strategic options for developing future-orientated initial teacher education*' and our shared '*Action Plan*' can be found here. We will also provide updates in [The Highlighter](#) - our regular newsletter for teachers.

Best wishes for the holidays,



Pauline Barnes

General Manager - Professional Services