

**EDUCATION COUNCIL**

NEW ZEALAND | Matatū Aotearoa

# Advice Paper: Positioning Teaching as a Postgraduate Profession?

**PREPARED BY THE EDUCATION COUNCIL  
WITH ADVICE FROM PROFESSOR ROGER MOLTZEN**



## INTRODUCTION

The Education Council of Aotearoa (the Council) is proposing a series of changes to New Zealand's initial teacher education (ITE) system that aim to ensure that future graduate teachers have the skills and knowledge needed for today's classrooms and early childhood centres, and learning spaces of the future. The most significant of these proposals is to increasingly make a postgraduate ITE qualification the benchmark for registration of new teachers. In addition applicants would require strong knowledge, in at least one curriculum learning area relevant to their teaching role, gained in a prior degree.

The proposed move to expand the availability of ITE postgraduate teaching qualifications, and requiring teachers to have expertise in curriculum subjects/learning areas, are international trends among high-performing education systems in other countries. The underpinning rationale is to lift the quality of teaching to raise learner outcomes and achievement. It aims to ensure that teachers have the capability to adapt their practice to 21st century learning environments, to lift the calibre of people attracted to a teaching career, and raise the status of the profession.

Making ITE a postgraduate profession would have significant implications for the shape of our ITE provision. The majority of programmes leading to teacher registration are bachelor degrees or graduate diplomas (level 7 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF)). Graduate diploma, honours and master's degree programmes already require graduate entry. This means around a quarter of students currently enter ITE with a prior degree. At present postgraduate qualifications make up a small portion of programmes. Of around 9,500 students<sup>1</sup> studying ITE in 2015, only about 4% were enrolled in postgraduate study leading to teacher registration.

This advice paper discusses the evidence behind positioning teaching as a postgraduate profession. It provides information about:

- the qualifications that best align with the graduate outcomes we want new teachers to demonstrate;
- international evidence from high-performing education systems;
- the benefits of a prior degree to gain curriculum expertise;
- New Zealand's journey towards a postgraduate teaching qualification;
- concerns about making ITE a postgraduate profession; and
- a discussion about the length of postgraduate qualifications.

### **What qualifications align best with the graduate outcomes we want new teachers to demonstrate?**

In determining the appropriate qualification level for future ITE programmes, we need to consider the skills and knowledge we expect future graduates to acquire during their ITE studies alongside the required graduate outcomes of different types of qualifications.

Research tells us that teachers need the right mix of competencies to enable all young people to develop the knowledge, skills and values to be successful in an increasingly complex world (Loughran & Hamilton, 2016). The Education Council has indicated it is seeking future teaching graduates to meet the new Standards for Teaching Professionals (with support). The skills and knowledge include:

- pedagogical knowledge – an advanced understanding of the theory and practice of learning and teaching;
- adaptive expertise – the ability to independently (and collectively with colleagues) research, implement and evaluate the impact of learning strategies on learner outcomes and achievement;
- in-depth knowledge in one or more curriculum learning areas – providing an strong understanding of the New Zealand Curriculum/Te Marautanga o Aotearoa/Te Whāriki (curriculum) around which to develop their practice;
- pedagogical content knowledge – how to best teach and enable learning in specific curriculum areas;
- 'disposition to teach' – including the character, values and ability to apply their skills in a way that provides an inclusive learning environment that supports learners with diverse needs and from the many cultures in New Zealand;

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<sup>1</sup> Equivalent full-time students (EFTS)

- willingness to embrace technology and future changes to ways of teaching and working; and
- the ability to work collegially and collaboratively with students, colleagues, parents and communities.

These skills aim to ensure that new teachers are not only competent when they first start teaching – but also equipped with the capability to continue to develop their ongoing practice.

The NZQF describes degree qualifications (level 7) as providing students with an introduction to knowledge in a subject. Students must demonstrate a basic knowledge of research methods, problem-solving and self-directed learning. In contrast, only qualifications at level 8 and above require students to show evidence of advanced knowledge about a field or professional practice and to be prepared for independent research. Postgraduate level programmes should offer an opportunity to integrate advanced theoretical learning about how to teach, with the practice of teaching.

Expanding the range of postgraduate ITE qualifications at level 8 or above, acknowledges that excellent teaching is a complex process. It recognises that great teachers need advanced knowledge about teaching and learning as well as the skills to undertake independent research. It would provide students with integrated opportunities to experience applying theoretical knowledge to their professional practice, and to begin a process of continuous improvement – with the aim of lifting the educational achievement of learners.

Postgraduate qualifications also align well with the Education Council's draft Standards for the Teaching Profession that describe the expectations and aspirations of the teaching profession and high quality teaching in New Zealand (Education Council, 2017).

For more information about NZQF qualification descriptions and expected graduate outcomes, see Appendix One.

### International evidence for postgraduate qualifications

#### **A move towards postgraduate ITE in many highly-ranked education systems**

Internationally ITE is increasingly being positioned at the postgraduate level, with several countries and many highly ranked ITE providers offering only postgraduate programmes or moving in this direction. In comparable jurisdictions more secondary programmes are positioned at postgraduate level than primary and ECE programmes, and most require at least a bachelor's degree to register as a teacher. In the case of ECE, a range of qualifications may be offered including some lower level qualifications.

While there is limited research to demonstrate that moving to a postgraduate qualification on its own results in significant gains in learner outcomes and achievement, some scholars strongly advocate for postgraduate ITE.

Any assessment of the relative merits of different types and levels of programmes has to focus on measures of programme effectiveness. What constitutes 'effectiveness' in this context will continue to be a matter for debate but there has been a shift from a primary focus on programme design and content, to a focus on outcomes for students. Since the introduction of international surveys designed to measure learner achievement and evaluate national education systems, much attention has been paid to top-ranked systems and how their successes can be accounted for. The approach that these countries take in preparing their teachers has been of interest to those looking for factors that might be replicated elsewhere. Positioning teacher education at the postgraduate level has been cited by a number of commentators as an important factor contributing to these countries' high learner achievement data.

There is some research to indicate that more qualified teachers are better teachers. A 2008 study commissioned by Teaching Australia, now the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), did report a difference between the graduates of programmes at different levels. 'Students who entered teaching on the basis of a completed degree, or who entered the more demanding postgraduate option of a Master of Teaching rather than a Graduate Diploma, were more likely to be able to analyse student work and thus scored well on the teachers' knowledge trait' (Louden et al; 2010, p. 11).

Some scholars have advocated very strongly for a shift to postgraduate qualifications for teachers. In their report to the United Kingdom Training and Development Agency for Schools, Every Teacher a Master, Hopkins and Matthews (2009) state that the 'Master's in Teaching and Learning (MTL) is a world-class idea. The evidence is clear that the world's high performing educational systems take the quality of their teaching force very seriously and among the few key strategies for ensuring excellence in teaching is making teaching a master's level profession'.

Similarly, following an international review of teacher education and induction for the Queensland Government, Caldwell and Sutton (2010, p. iv) recommended: 'That from a date to be determined teaching be recognised as a graduate profession and that registration for beginning teachers be conditional on completion of a five-year programme of pre-service education and two years formal induction. These five-year programmes would be a bachelor's degree followed by two years of a master's of teaching or equivalent degree, or a double degree leading to a bachelor's degree and a master's degree'. To date there are no Australian states that have made a postgraduate qualification mandatory for entry to the teaching profession.

### **Different approaches to postgraduate qualifications**

Education systems around the world have adopted different approaches to postgraduate qualifications design and delivery. Some jurisdictions require teachers to have an integrated postgraduate degree – where both the undergraduate and master's degree qualifications must be in teacher education. In others, undergraduate and postgraduate pathways into teaching are offered alongside each other, often with master's degree options also available to students. In addition some countries encourage high-performing graduates to complete a postgraduate qualification once they are in employment. Examples of different models are discussed below.

### **Examples of integrated ITE pathways (undergraduate and postgraduate)**

In looking at high achieving systems where teachers are required to hold a postgraduate qualification, Finland is where most people start. While there are differences between Finnish and New Zealand society, this model is still worth consideration. The high status of teaching in Finland is well documented. Ten times more candidates apply for teacher training than are selected.

The entry requirement for employment as a teacher in all Finnish primary and secondary schools is a master's degree. Preschool and kindergarten teachers must have a bachelor's degree but can do a master's qualification. Finnish universities offer an integrated two-tier programme; a three-year bachelor's degree followed by a two-year master's degree programme.

According to a review by Sahlberg (2010, p. 4), 'Finland's commitment to research-based teacher education means that educational theories, research methodologies and practice all play an important part in preparation programs. Teacher education curricula are designed to create a systematic pathway from the foundations of educational thinking to educational research methodologies and then on to more advanced fields of the educational sciences'. Finnish students also learn the skills of how to design, conduct, and present original research on practical or theoretical aspects of education.

Sahlberg (2013) cautions about seeing the qualification as the most relevant factor in Finland's educational success. He notes that foreign observers of the Finnish school system often conclude that it's the academic advanced degree that makes teachers and the school system so effective. In his opinion this undervalues the structure of the qualification. Sahlberg states... 'there is a difference between the graduate degree in teaching in Finland and that in most other countries.... Primary school teachers in Finland study education for at least five years as their major academic subject, and are required to write a thesis that meets the same academic standards as in any other field of study in Finnish research universities. In other words, all primary school teachers have their first university degree in education. The extended length of study enables them to gain more in-depth understanding of child development, pedagogical content, curriculum, assessment, school improvement, and leadership than teachers in many other countries have'. (Sahlberg, 2013, p. 38)

In Norway ITE reform was initiated in 2010 and followed what some Norwegians refer to as “the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) shock” that showed that Norwegian students had not performed as well as many had hoped or expected. The most recent step in the process of improving teacher education was the release of a new education strategy, *Lærerløftet* (or, raising teachers). The strategy outlines the key themes for continued improvement of teacher education and top amongst these is the requirement that teachers obtain a master’s degree. By this year, all teacher education programmes must be structured as five-year programmes. A Ministry of Education spokesperson said that Norway was following Finland in its belief that teacher education should be research-based (International Education News, 2015).

Estonia is another high-performing education system that requires a master’s degree. According to the 2015 PISA results, Estonian 15-year-olds are the best in Europe and among the strongest in the entire world. The knowledge and skills of Estonian 15-year-olds in biology, geography, physics and chemistry were among the best in the world – the first in Europe and third on the global scale.

Teacher education and training in Estonia is at the master’s level and with three stages: Pre-service education that provides basic pedagogical knowledge and skills; an induction year that supports the students’ introduction to educational organisations and promotes the development of skills through practice and analysis; and in-service training once the student has graduated. The induction year restricts new teachers to a maximum of 18 working hours a week and all new teachers also have access to mentors. After completing the induction year, novice teachers acquire a certificate of teaching, issued by a certification board, while a certificate of completion of the support programme is issued by the university.

#### **Examples of mixed undergraduate and postgraduate pathways**

A common approach internationally is to offer a range of teacher education pathways into teaching including undergraduate pathways for school leavers, and postgraduate pathways for graduates.

Countries adopting this approach include Australia, England, Scotland and Singapore. New Zealand also falls into this category following the relatively recent approval of postgraduate ITE (exemplary programmes) and also the Teach First NZ postgraduate diploma.

Some ITE organisations are reducing undergraduate ITE programmes and replacing them with postgraduate entry qualifications. Starting this year, the University of Edinburgh has reduced the range of integrated four-year primary education degree programmes in favour of more ‘in demand’ professional graduate diplomas in education at primary and secondary levels (one-year, graduate entry). They also offer a master’s of science in transformative learning and teaching (two-years).

#### **Singapore – a system encouraging postgraduate study**

Singapore is an example of a high-performing education system with postgraduate and undergraduate pathways into teaching. In the 2015 PISA rankings, Singapore 15 year-olds topped the world in tests in mathematics, reading and science. The Nanyang Technological University, National Institute of Education (NIE) is the sole provider of ITE in Singapore. In contrast to the country examples already mentioned, many teachers in Singapore enter the profession with a bachelor’s level ITE degree. A key difference is that NIE selects its candidates from the top five percent of high school graduates and that they complete a four year BA (Education) or BSc (Education).

In addition, Singapore encourages graduates to gain a master’s degree. Students are able to take up to three master’s level courses during their undergraduate studies, with the intention of a smooth and faster transition to higher degrees. Outstanding BA and BSc (Ed) graduates may also be considered for a master’s sponsorship after completing their degree.

### Education faculties that only offer postgraduate ITE

A further source of evidence for the move to postgraduate ITE can be found in the academic requirements for ITE programmes at the world's most highly-ranked faculties of education. In the 2016 QS World University Rankings<sup>2</sup> by subject, amongst the top 10 faculties of education, eight offer only postgraduate ITE programmes<sup>3</sup>:

- University College London: Postgraduate Certificate
- Harvard: Postgraduate Master's
- Stanford: Postgraduate Master's
- The University of Cambridge: Postgraduate Certificate
- The University of Hong Kong: Postgraduate Diploma
- The University of Melbourne: Master's
- The University of California: Master's

Some critics may see university rankings as having limited relevance to the debate at hand, probably because of a perception these are based on criteria that have little relevance to preparing a teacher for the classroom. It is, however, worth noting that one of the four criteria used for these rankings is employer reputation. Given that schools are the employers of most graduates, their views must be given some credence, even if the sample size is small.

### A prior degree that ensures strong curriculum knowledge

As well as expanding the availability of postgraduate ITE qualifications over time, the Education Council is proposing that applicants have either a prior general degree (not in ITE) or a redesigned bachelor's of education degree that would make sure teachers bring strong content knowledge to their practice and in turn to their schools/kura/ECE setting. Student teachers would be required to gain expertise in one or more learning areas directly relevant to the New Zealand curriculum/Te Marautanga o Aotearoa/Te Whāriki (for example: English, mathematics/pāngarau, Te Reo Māori, science/pūtaiao, child development etc.).

Getting the balance right between curriculum knowledge and the many other academic and practice demands is complex. It is a particular issue for primary level teachers because of the number and breadth of subjects within the curriculum at this level, but also because teachers need to know how to make meaningful links between subjects. The challenge for postgraduate ITE, particularly for primary and ECE levels which require more 'general' knowledge, is how to cover the breadth required in a postgraduate qualification length of up to two years (McNamara et al, 2017).

Comparable education systems around the world are already making changes to require teachers to have in-depth knowledge in one or more subjects/learning areas relevant to their curriculum. Often, this shift is part of wider efforts to boost teacher numbers and learner achievement in STEM subjects, with the long-term aim of lifting workforce capacity in skill areas that are key to future economic growth. There are two main approaches: requiring teachers to specialise in selected subjects during their ITE degree, or requiring applicants to gain subject knowledge in a prior degree. Some examples from comparable education systems are discussed below.

In 2015 the Australian government agreed that all new teachers should have the ability to effectively teach core subject areas, such as mathematics and science, and that every new primary teacher should graduate with a subject specialisation. While primary teachers will continue to teach other subjects outside their specialisation, their expertise will be available within the school to assist other teachers (Australian Government Response, 2015; AITSL, n.d.). The move is strongly supported by Australia's Office of the Chief Scientist. In a paper titled 'Transforming STEM<sup>4</sup> teaching in Australian primary schools: everybody's business' (2015) it is explained that children entering the education system now will join a very different workforce in 2030 with a rising premium on skills. The paper sets out potential steps to boost learner achievement in STEM subjects including attracting high achievers in STEM to primary, boosting STEM in pre-service teaching and making sure schools are supported by specialist STEM teachers (Australian Government, 2015).

2 An annual publication of university rankings published by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS).

3 Of the two remaining: the University of Oxford does not offer ITE, while the University of British Columbia offers a four-year undergraduate double degree programme.

4 STEM covers science, technology, engineering and mathematics



The United Kingdom is also requiring new teachers to have greater subject knowledge. In 2016 the Government released a white paper 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' setting out a five year plan to build on and extend the reform of their education system. This includes a focus on 'improving the quality of training so that all new teachers enter the classroom with advanced subject knowledge, practical behaviour management skills, and a greater understanding of evidence-based practice and how to adapt their teaching to unlock the full potential of pupils with a wide range of different needs' (UK Government, 2016; pg. 28).

Scotland is also boosting teacher subject knowledge. It has phased out four-year bachelor of education degrees into primary teaching in favour of four year university-based concurrent or combined degrees containing both teacher education and in-depth subject study. Students take courses from across a university campus that provide them with a deeper understanding of important areas of the curriculum. These degrees provide a base for teachers to develop further specialisms during their career. Alternatively, postgraduate diploma programmes are also available for those applicants that already have a degree and subject expertise. Similarly, the secondary education teaching degree is awarded in a particular subject or subjects with the expectation that teachers will also contribute to interdisciplinary learning. Postgraduate diplomas into secondary teaching offer a faster pathway for those students who have a degree (University of Edinburgh, April, 2017).

Singapore is also introducing subject specialisation. Since December 2016, students studying to be general teachers at primary level must complete training in dual subject specialisations to develop a stronger mastery of content as well as pedagogy (Singapore Government, April 2017).

### Our journey towards postgraduate ITE

New Zealand has been considering making ITE a postgraduate qualification for the better part of a decade. The recommendation was first made in the Education Workforce Advisory Group's 2010 report, A Vision for the Teaching Profession (New Zealand Government, 2010). Established by the Minister of Education, the role of the Advisory Group was to provide advice on how to raise the overall quality of teaching across the school system. Their final report recommended moving towards ITE being provided only at the postgraduate level and making entry into teaching dependent on holding a postgraduate qualification.

The report stated that the shift to postgraduate ITE would have the following benefits:

- Moving to a postgraduate course raises the bar of entry to the profession and sends signals about expected quality.
- The first degree documents ability to learn independently and to manage lifelong learning. This is likely to reduce dropout/failure rates and wasted expenditure on ITE.
- The decision to become a teacher would be explicit – once made, those entering teacher education programmes should effectively be treated as part of the teaching profession.
- The prerequisite for an initial degree may act as a quality control process and provides some assurance of the skills necessary to move to teacher education (particularly where ITE providers are becoming more selective about applications and achievement requirements).
- The undergraduate degree provides the generic academic skills and subject specific knowledge which allows for a greater focus in the postgraduate qualification on the skills necessary to be an effective teacher.
- The concurrence of the postgraduate degree and the provisional registration period supports a stronger link between classroom practice and ITE. (p.14)

The Advisory Group's report influenced the Government's Quality Teaching Agenda<sup>5</sup> which included the provision of additional funding to establish a small number of exemplary postgraduate ITE programmes. This initiative, managed by the Ministry of Education, represents a significant step towards postgraduate pathways into teaching. It provides an opportunity to pilot these qualifications on a small scale and to build the knowledge base about how to best support the wider introduction of postgraduate qualifications and exemplary practice.

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<sup>5</sup> The Government's Quality Teaching Agenda is a Budget 2013 initiative designed to lift the quality of teaching and strengthen the capability of the schooling workforce. Postgraduate ITE initiative programmes receive additional funding of up to \$4000 per EFTS.

### Postgraduate ITE pilots are growing the NZ evidence base

The postgraduate ITE initiative aims to determine whether postgraduate study makes a difference to the quality and capability of graduate teacher practice, and in turn contributes to raising learner outcomes and achievement. The master's degree offers an opportunity to find out what exemplary practice looks like. The programmes are intended to enable participants to develop the adaptive expertise necessary to operate effectively in complex teaching and learning contexts. The aim of postgraduate ITE is to produce beginner teachers that are confident, culturally competent and well-prepared (Ministry of Education, April, 2017).

The features of the postgraduate ITE exemplary programmes initiative, adapted from the intervention layer of the intervention logic (Martin Jenkins & Associates, 2015) are:

- programmes that allow students to experience and practise, evidence-based practices of effective teaching
- capable providers design and implement high-quality innovative postgraduate programmes
- quality practicum experiences
- strong school-provider partnerships
- capable school-based mentors
- capable students with high academic ability selected, and
- additional funding to support programme development, ongoing improvement and partnerships with schools.

The first postgraduate ITE programmes were approved in 2013 and commenced in 2014. Initially programmes were approved in primary and secondary teacher education but have broadened more recently to include early childhood and Māori-medium teacher education. Almost all these programmes are university-based and are one-year master's degree programmes.

Martin Jenkins & Associates is conducting a multi-year evaluation to understand those features that have the biggest impact on graduate outcomes. While the evaluation is ongoing, there are some early findings signalled in the February 2017 Interim Report. Although it is too early to draw conclusions (due to the small sample size), early programme outcomes indicate that nine out of ten graduates secure employment and are working in teaching positions within two years. The findings also suggest that graduates are seen as highly competent across a range of areas and, in many cases, more competent than other beginning teachers.

The interim evaluation reports to date have identified strengths and recommended areas for improvement, both in design and implementation. The indicative findings provide information about potential risks associated with a move to postgraduate level qualifications and exemplary practice standards. These include:

- the compressed timeframes associated with a one-year master's degree resulted in heavy workloads for student teachers;
- the demographics of master's student teachers are similar to other ITE, but not as highly diverse as expected;
- smaller numbers of graduates are being produced than initially predicted; course costs and lack of access to student allowances may be reducing student numbers and diversity; and
- expectations around collaborative partnerships with schools and extended practica are associated with higher costs – but are seen as a valued opportunity to integrate theory and practice.

### How long should a postgraduate programme be?

The time allocated to completing a postgraduate qualification is also a critical factor in whether a shift to postgraduate level translates into greater benefits for students. Internationally a minority of postgraduate ITE programmes are one calendar year long. The most common duration is 18 months to two years.

The Education Council has not indicated a preference for a particular postgraduate programme model. Options include the development of a postgraduate diploma (usually one year of study) or master's degree (usually up to two years of study). Part-time and mixed delivery models involving distance learning are also possible models to explore. An additional consideration is the need to design programmes that allow enough time to integrate practicum placements with theoretical knowledge.



One of the challenges identified in the interim postgraduate ITE evaluation reports is how to deliver a master's programme in a 12 month period that is a significant step change from the current undergraduate and graduate programmes. Programme design needs to allow adequate time to develop pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge relevant to the teaching level, and extended quality practica experiences. Given that the compressed one year master's programme model results in high-workloads for students, partner schools/kura and ITE providers and may be less attractive to a wide range of students for a variety of reasons, future programmes may benefit from a longer duration and more flexible delivery options.

There are some significant issues to consider in introducing a postgraduate qualification of 18 or 24 months duration, including how to make qualifications attractive and affordable to a diverse range of students. The issues, however, can be resolved if lifting the qualification requirements for teacher registration will aid the achievement of the primary goal: improving the quality of education in New Zealand.

### Concerns about moving to postgraduate qualifications

While there is some evidence to support shifting to postgraduate ITE qualifications, discussion with providers about the proposal to date has identified issues that need to be considered and planned for. Initial feedback gathered during an ITE design workshop in late 2016 found that some ITE providers agree that postgraduate ITE is a desirable goal. Many providers also agree that the indicators at level 8 on the NZQF best aligns with the level of skill we want future teachers to demonstrate, for example inquiry-led practice and adaptive expertise skills.

Universities, who deliver around two thirds of ITE EFTS, are generally supportive of a move to postgraduate ITE. 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. In 2016 the New Zealand Council of Deans of Education, produced a paper entitled 'Summary Recommendations on Future Directions for Initial Teacher Education in New Zealand'. The paper, informed by a report on national and international trends in ITE, included a recommendation that teaching become a postgraduate profession at the granting of the full practicing certificate (NZCDE, 2016). More recently the university sector has indicated a willingness to move to postgraduate qualifications as a requirement for teacher registration.

One of the main concerns about moving to postgraduate qualifications is that ITE would become a less affordable option for some students, and if combined with higher entry requirements, could reduce student diversity. While postgraduate students may be eligible for a student loan, they are not eligible for a student allowance. As a consequence fewer Māori and Pasifika students, and those from lower income backgrounds, may be attracted to ITE. Other factors that might deter students include higher academic requirements for entry, increased course costs, and longer study time (for some). This could lead to fewer ITE enrolments, a less diverse teaching workforce, and potentially teacher supply shortages particularly in priority areas such as Māori-medium education.

Another concern is the capability and capacity of ITE providers, especially niche Māori-medium and early childhood providers, to shift to postgraduate qualifications given the changes needed to meet staffing and research expectations.

Early childhood education providers are concerned that there is limited evidence about whether teachers with postgraduate qualifications have benefits for curriculum implementation in the early childhood sector. The sector is also worried that more early childhood teachers will choose not to qualify, which could affect the supply of qualified teachers and lead to teacher shortages. There is however a strong rationale for providing some postgraduate ITE pathways in early childhood to ensure pedagogical and professional leadership continues to grow, to enhance the understanding of inquiry-based practice in early childhood settings and also to enable cross-sector conversations across education levels and within Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako.

### Successful transformation linked to wider ITE system change

Overall, after reviewing the available literature and a range of 'expert opinion' from around the world, we can conclude that lifting the ITE qualification requirement on its own holds limited benefits. However, when it is combined with other changes the gains can be much greater. New Zealand has an opportunity to not only reposition ITE qualifications, but also to rethink other features of the wider ITE system.

In many ITE systems the move towards postgraduate programmes has been accompanied by a range of other measures intended to:

- lift the status of the profession by sending a strong message about the level of preparation required to be a registered teacher;
- increase programme quality, rigour and expectations commensurate with an advanced qualification;
- attract higher calibre candidates into teaching through higher entry requirements;
- ensure all teachers have subject knowledge relevant to the curriculum;
- minimise the number of candidates 'drifting' into early childhood and primary teaching after graduating from high school, with little appreciation of what it takes to be a teacher, so lowering the drop-out rates;
- increase understanding, appreciation and discernment of research and research findings in ITE, including opportunities to undertake practice-related research and lift data literacy
- rationalise the number of programme pathways into the profession, and ensure greater consistency across provision; and
- apply a common professional standard across primary, secondary, and in some cases early years teachers.

The Education Council is proposing a broad programme of work to strengthen the New Zealand ITE system. Other suggested changes include lifting entry requirements (particularly literacy and numeracy), building the quality of practica, introducing new standards for graduating teachers, improving confidence in assessment processes leading to registration, developing a more coherent and collaborative network of provision, and ensuring better alignment between graduate supply and workforce needs.

Expanding the availability of postgraduate level ITE qualifications would be a catalyst for significant change – as the requirements of a qualification at level 8 or above on the NZQF are markedly different from those of a bachelor's degree or graduate diploma. There are implications for candidate selection, programme entry requirements, programme design and content (breadth, depth and length of study), assessment, teaching practice and in-school/kura mentoring, graduating teacher standards, induction and in-service teacher professional development.

### An opportunity to reinvigorate ITE

The development of a wider range of postgraduate qualifications would provide an opportunity to redesign and reinvigorate our ITE system. Requiring postgraduate applicants to have a non-ITE prior degree in one or more subjects/learning areas relevant to the curriculum would be a step towards strengthening our education system. However, significant gains could also be made by redesigning the bachelor of education/teaching degree to have a greater focus on adaptive expertise and curriculum knowledge.

Given the lead in times for change in the ITE system, decisions about whether we will expand postgraduate ITE provision and require students to have or gain greater subject knowledge, and how quickly this will happen, need to be made sooner rather than later.

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## APPENDIX ONE: NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK – QUALIFICATION DESCRIPTIONS AND OUTCOMES\*

Level	Qualification description	Expected outcomes
7	A <b>Bachelor's Degree</b> provides individuals with a systematic and coherent introduction to a body of knowledge of a recognised major subject (or subjects, in the case of a double degree or a double major) as well as to problem-solving and associated basic techniques of self-directed work and learning.	A graduate of a <b>Bachelor's Degree</b> is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate intellectual independence, critical thinking and analytic rigour</li> <li>• engage in self-directed learning</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and skills related to the ideas, principles, concepts, chief research methods and problem-solving techniques of a recognised major subject</li> <li>• demonstrate the skills needed to acquire, understand and assess information from a range of sources</li> <li>• demonstrate communication and collaborative skills.</li> </ul>
7	A <b>Graduate Diploma</b> allows degree graduates to pursue a significant body of study at an advanced undergraduate level. The Diploma is typically designed as a bridging qualification to postgraduate study as well as broadening knowledge and skills in a familiar subject or discipline, or developing knowledge in a new area.	A person with a <b>Graduate Diploma</b> is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate the outcomes of a Bachelor's Degree, and in addition</li> <li>• demonstrate the outcomes of a Bachelor's Degree in a new area of study.</li> </ul>
8	A <b>Postgraduate Diploma</b> is designed to extend and deepen an individual's knowledge and skills by building on attainment in the principal subject(s) of the qualifying degree, graduate diploma or graduate certificate. A Postgraduate Diploma prepares an individual for independent research and scholarship in the principal subject of the diploma.	A graduate of a <b>Postgraduate Diploma</b> is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show evidence of advanced knowledge about a specialist field of enquiry or professional practice</li> <li>• engage in rigorous intellectual analysis, criticism and problem-solving.</li> </ul>
9	A <b>Master's Degree</b> qualifies individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for research, a pathway for further learning, professional practice and/or scholarship. Their outcomes are demonstrably in advance of undergraduate study, and require individuals to engage in research and/or advanced scholarship. Master's Degrees are constituted in one discipline or coherent programme of study. They may be undertaken by taught courses or research, or by a combination of both.	A graduate of a <b>Master's Degree</b> is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show evidence of advanced knowledge about a specialist field of enquiry or professional practice</li> <li>• demonstrate mastery of sophisticated theoretical subject matter</li> <li>• evaluate critically the findings and discussions in the literature</li> <li>• research, analyse and argue from evidence</li> <li>• work independently and apply knowledge to new situations</li> <li>• engage in rigorous intellectual analysis, criticism and problem-solving.</li> </ul>

\*Adapted from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority website, emphasis added.