

## Terms of Reference

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### **Professional Advisory Group - Terms of Reference**

#### **The Role and Purpose of the Professional Advisory Group**

The Minister of Education is retaining the NCEA Professional Advisory Group (PAG) to advise the Minister and Ministry of Education in relation to NCEA. They are a group of current and former secondary principals, providing sector expertise about NCEA.

The PAG will fulfil two functions:

- A source of advice for the Minister of Education;
- A critical friend and advisor to the Ministry of Education.

#### **Functions of the PAG**

##### ***Advisors to the Minister of Education***

A function of the PAG is to advise the Ministry and Minister of Education on policy decisions related to NCEA and other wider NCEA related matters.

The PAG will provide independent advice to the Minister, at the Minister's request. This may include:

- Advice on strengthening the NCEA qualification, improving its national and international credibility, making internal and external assessment more robust, the NCEA co-requisite, and Vocational Pathways in secondary school
- Mātauranga Māori in NCEA
- Comments on advice provided to the Minister by the Ministry of Education or other agencies on NCEA
- Advice on other matters related to NCEA as the Minister requests

The Minister of Education may engage directly with the PAG and the Chair may also engage directly with the Minister; but typically, the PAG's advice will be provided through the Ministry of Education as intermediary at the Minister of Education's request.

##### ***Advisors to the Ministry of Education***

As part of their role advising the Minister of Education, the Minister has asked that the PAG provide support and advice to the Ministry of Education on NCEA.

The Ministry of Education, through the Deputy Secretary, Te Poutāhū | Curriculum Centre, may ask the PAG to provide support and advice by:

- Providing advice on NCEA to meet the needs of our schooling sector
- Testing the Ministry's thinking around design and implementation
- Acting as a critical friend to the Ministry on matters relating to NCEA.

The PAG will work to support the Ministry to understand the perspectives of members of the teaching profession and will test the Ministry's advice. This will not compromise the PAG's right to provide the Minister with independent advice on NCEA, and / or the Ministry's recommendations.

#### **Membership**

The members of the PAG will be appointed by the Minister of Education. The Group will comprise up to 13 members who are current or former secondary principals – one of whom will chair the PAG.

Membership of PAG members who are nominated by an organisation to represent their views must retain the confidence and support of their organisation during their term. If the support from the nominating organisation changes, this type of PAG member will be replaced with an appropriate alternative nominee (provided by that organisation).

A nominating organisation will advise when their individual's membership is to cease in writing to the Ministry's nominated contact person.

### **Chair**

The Chair will lead meetings of the PAG, unless otherwise directed by the Office of the Minister of Education, or otherwise agreed.

The Chair may also engage directly with the Minister of Education on behalf of the PAG.

### **Confirmation**

Members of the PAG (including the Chair) are approved by the Appointment and Honours Committee. Members of the PAG affirm that they have provided all relevant and / or requested information relevant to the approval process, and that all information disclosed is true and accurate to the best of the knowledge of the PAG members.

### **Fees**

Fees for members of the Group have been assessed in accordance with the Cabinet Fees Framework, according to Cabinet Office Circular (19)1. The Group has been classified as a Group 4, Level 2 body.

Based on this, the chair of the PAG will receive a daily fee of **\$700**. Members of the PAG will receive a daily fee of **\$500**.

In addition, members will be reimbursed for actual and reasonable travel, meal and accommodation costs.

In line with the Fees Framework, members of the PAG who are currently employed by a Board of Trustees, or by any government agency, organisation, or body, or any local authority as defined under section 5(1) of the Local Government Act 2005, must not receive both their ordinary pay and their fees for acting on the PAG if they discharge PAG duties during usual working hours. In the case of current principals, the member will receive their ordinary salary only.

### **Secretariat**

Secretariat services for the PAG will be provided by the Ministry of Education.

### **Media**

The PAG, and PAG members acting in that capacity, will not make media statements without the prior agreement of the Chair or the Minister of Education.

If the PAG are asked to provide comment on any issue relating to education by a third party (i.e., other than the Minister of Education or Ministry of Education), that PAG member will forward the question or request to the Chair, the Office of the Minister of Education, and to the Ministry of Education through the NCEA review mailbox ([ncea.review@education.govt.nz](mailto:ncea.review@education.govt.nz)).

### **Meetings**

The primary meeting place for the PAG will be online with an option for members to join in Wellington. Two to four face-to-face meetings will be scheduled yearly alongside the virtual meetings. The Ministry reserves the right to call further in-person meetings if deemed necessary. The PAG will meet when requested by the Minister of Education, in consultation between the Chair and the Ministry of Education.

All members are expected to attend the scheduled meetings and will provide good reason for non-attendance (partial attendance does not constitute non-attendance). Only meetings properly scheduled by the Ministry count for the purposes of this non-attendance clause. A scheduled meeting is constituted as an online meeting called 2 weeks in advance, or an in-person meeting called at least 4 weeks in advance of the meeting date. Members' schedules will be considered when formally calling a scheduled meeting. Urgent online meetings may be called with just 24 hours' notice for those able to attend to provide urgent advice (eg, COVID related advice).

A member should provide good reason to justify their non-attendance. It is not possible for members to delegate attendance to others and this is a presumption of all ministerial appointments. The Chair is responsible for managing member attendance matters and will be supported by the Ministry. The Chair may decide whether individual member attendance is satisfactory, considering matters on an individual case-by-case basis, with due regard for consistency across other individuals within the advisory group. If not satisfied, the Chair may recommend to the Ministry that an individual member is suspended pending a reappointment process – the Chair has discretion in this matter. Such suspension takes effect immediately on notice to the member but can be subject to review.

When the Chair is forming a view on non-attendance matters, it is generally to be expected that members may not always be able to attend meetings. However, this should not exceed approximately two meetings in a given year and/or school year. These expectations do not apply to urgent meetings called with less than 2 weeks' notice.

The PAG will aim to achieve a consensus on the issues it considers in meetings but is not required to do so.

The Ministry of Education will support the Chair to prepare meeting agendas where appropriate. The agenda and papers for meetings of the PAG will be circulated to PAG members four working days in advance of each meeting.

The Ministry has a budget to operate the PAG, including travel costs. The PAG and its members will not have an independent budget.

### **Contestability of advice**

The PAG and the Ministry of Education will provide advice to the Minister of Education on NCEA in good faith and with regards to the interests of the other. Where appropriate, the PAG and Ministry of Education will provide the other with copies of relevant advice provided to the Minister.

### **Conflicts of interest**

As part of the Appointment and Honours Committee appointment process, the members of the PAG have disclosed conflicts of interest relating to the PAG and the NCEA change programme.

Members of the PAG are responsible for keeping the Conflicts of Interest Register updated. They must disclose all changes or additions to their actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest at the earliest opportunity so these can be documented. An agreed management plan will be made with the PAG Chair and the Ministry where required and also documented in the Register.

Where required a member will recuse themselves from consideration on specific matters where a significant conflict has arisen. Members are individually accountable for how they manage their own conflicts; it is not the Ministry of Education's responsibility.

If members of the PAG develop new, relevant conflicts of interest, whether real, potential or perceived, in the course of the NCEA review, they will inform the Ministry of Education as soon as is reasonably practicable.

### **Confidentiality**

The work of the PAG is confidential, unless otherwise agreed by either the Minister of Education or Ministry of Education as appropriate. Members of the PAG will maintain this confidence and will not disclose information about the operations of the PAG to any person without the above agreement.

### **Tenure**

The PAG membership and Terms of Reference will be reviewed by July 2027 or earlier if the Minister chooses.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982