

GUIDANCE: SSSCA COVERAGE OF NON-TEACHING GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS

Purpose

This guidance supports boards and principals to move their non-teaching guidance counsellors to the correct placement on the Support Staff in Schools' Collective Agreement (SSSCA).

Who does this guidance apply to? What do I need to know?

This guidance applies to schools who employ **non-teaching guidance counsellors**, regardless of which employment agreement they have previously been placed on.

This guidance does not apply to teaching guidance counsellors, who have certification or a limited authority to teach from the Teaching Council – their previous coverage remains unchanged.

Prior to 24 March 2026, all guidance counsellors were excluded from the SSSCA and non-teaching guidance counsellors should have been employed on the promulgated generic IEA (sometimes called concurrence IEA). That IEA applies to those whose work is not covered by a collective agreement. You can see that agreement here: [Permanent and Fixed-Term Employees Individual Employment Agreement](#). However, in some circumstances, non-teaching guidance counsellors may have been placed on the wrong employment agreement. Some may already be placed on the SSSCA. If there are any questions related to correcting employment agreements, advice should be sought from Gov Hub School Boards Service (previously referred to as NZSBA).

Members of NZEI Te Riu Roa or E tū are now automatically bound by the SSSCA. Non-union members can now be offered the promulgated Support Staff in Schools' IEA. That IEA can be found on this page: [Support staff in schools' collective and individual employment agreements - Ministry of Education](#).

How do I know if a counsellor is qualified?

The employer determines if the employee holds a relevant qualification for a guidance counsellor recognised at Level 7 or above on the NZQF or is a registered psychologist. An employer can request evidence of relevant Level 7 qualifications, which may include counselling, social work, or post-graduate nursing, specialising in mental health.

How does this change non-qualified guidance counsellors' pay?

Non-teaching guidance counsellors without formal qualifications should be assessed in accordance with Part 3E.3 “**Other Positions**” of the SSSCA. The minimum grade and step is Grade A-B step 1, so if the employee’s current rate is below this, it must be increased to that rate. Note, their hourly rate (as determined in clause 3E.3.9) must not be lower than their rate immediately before the transfer. If an employee is currently paid below this rate, their pay will need to be increased.

How does this change qualified non-teaching guidance counsellors' pay?

1. There is now a minimum pay rate for qualified non-teaching guidance counsellors of Grade D step 6 of the “Other Positions” pay scale set out in clause 3E.4.1. As at 24 March 2026 this is \$29.81 per hour or \$62,175 per annum for translating staff.¹ Employers will need to place employees on the pay scale, according to the table later in this guidance.
2. Employers may need to apply a salary loading (SALLO) to ensure pay is not reduced when translating from the previous agreement to the SSSCA pay scale.
3. Qualified guidance counsellors are eligible for a qualifications allowance of \$0.58 per hour to a maximum of \$1,125 per annum under clause 3.5 of the SSSCA. Guidance counsellors may also be eligible for other allowances.

Actions for Employers

Before Implementation on 23 June 2026

- Identify** whether your school employs a **non-teaching guidance counsellor/s**.
- Review this guidance**, SSSCA translation provisions (Annexe 1) and FAQs (Annexe 2).
- Communicate with impacted guidance counsellors** about how they are affected by this change.
- Provide union members with the SSSCA 2026-2028** and let them know the terms and conditions apply from 24 March 2026.
- Offer non-union members the 15 April IEA** based on the SSSCA 2026-2028. The new provisions will apply from the date guidance counsellors sign the IEA. You can let non-members know their work is now covered by a collective agreement and provide information about union membership.

¹ For new employees, the indicative formula for calculating salary from an hourly rate, and vice versa, is in notes in clause 3E.4.1.

From 23 June 2026, action in EdPay

(these are a high-level summary: more detailed EdPay instructions may be available from Education Payroll Ltd closer to the implementation date)

- ❑ **If a non-union member, place on the IEA. If a union member, place on the SSSCA.**
- ❑ **Update the designation code to: S98 for qualified non-teaching guidance counsellor.**
- ❑ **Place qualified non-teaching guidance counsellor/s on the appropriate step as set out in the table below.**
- ❑ **Assess and place unqualified guidance counsellors on the “Other Positions” pay scale set out in clause 3E.4.1 on rates no less than before the transfer. There is no designation code for unqualified counselling roles.**
- ❑ **Add SALLO, if required, if your guidance counsellor’s current pay is more than the printed maximum rate. This ensures their pay is maintained.**
- ❑ **Apply relevant allowances** if being placed on the SSSCA or related IEA for the first time.

Additionally

- ❑ **Employers can review their guidance counsellor/s pay**, taking into account the timing of previous increases and the impact of new allowances. Note: guidance counsellors paid above the minimum rate will not receive automatic increases in 2026. However, those not previously on the SSSCA may have access to the qualifications or other allowances. Employees can also request that their salary be reviewed. Employers can make decisions about whether to offer pay increases based on the above.

Qualified non-teaching guidance counsellor salary placement table

Hourly rate immediately before becoming bound by the SSSCA:	Translate to/on	What to do in EdPay:
Above step 7 <i>\$39.74 per hour or more</i> <i>\$82,886 per annum or more</i>	Maintain current rate Translate to step 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Put on new designation code (S98) ● Place on step 7 ● Apply salary loading (SALLO) to make pay no less than pre-settlement ● Apply relevant allowances
Between steps 6 and 7 <i>\$29.82- \$39.73 per hour</i> <i>\$62,175 - \$82,886 per annum</i>	Maintain current rate Translate to range of rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Put on new designation code (S98) ● Place on the range of rates that matches the current pay ● Apply relevant allowances

<p>At or below step 6</p> <p><i>\$29.81 per hour or less</i></p> <p><i>\$62,175 per annum or less</i></p>	<p>Translate to step 6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put on new designation code (S98) • Place on step 6. • Apply relevant allowances
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Need more help?

For any questions, contact Gov Hub School Board Services Advisory Support Centre (formerly NZSBA) on 0800 782 435 or email eradvice@tewhakaroputanga.org.nz.

Annexe 1- Guidance Counsellor Translation as set out in SSSCA Annexe 1

1. This Appendix sets out translation rules for non-teaching guidance counsellors who become bound by the SSSCA on 24 March 2026 as a result of the change of coverage. All references to steps below are the steps in the pay scale in clause 3E.4.1 of this agreement.
2. Translation Table for non-teaching guidance counsellors who hold a relevant qualification for a guidance counsellor recognised at Level 7 or above on the NZQF or is a registered psychologist.

Hourly rate immediately before becoming bound by the SSSCA:	Translate to/on
Above step 7	Maintain current rate
Between steps 6 and 7	Maintain current rate
At or below step 6	Step 6

3. If an employee is paid a salary, the hourly rate will be determined by dividing their full-time equivalent salary plus enduring allowances (but not incidental allowances) by:
 - 1955.357 for employees who work 37.5 hours per week full-time
 - 2085.714 for all other employees.
4. If an equivalent enduring allowance is provided for under the SSSCA, that will be excluded from the calculation of the hourly rate.
5. Translation for non-teaching guidance counsellors who do not hold a relevant qualification for a guidance counsellor recognised at Level 7 or above on the NZQF or is not a registered psychologist will be assessed in accordance with clause 3E.3.4, provided that their hourly rate (as determined in clause 3 above) must not be lower than their rate immediately before transfer.

Also available in: [Support Staff in Schools' Collective Agreement 2026-2028.pdf](#).

Annexe 2 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q. *Can boards choose to pay above the printed rates in the Support Staff in Schools Collective Agreement (SSSCA) for guidance counsellors?*

A. Yes. As the SSSCA is a minimum rates document, boards may pay above minimum rates. They must ensure that the guidance counsellor is already at the top step of grade D, step 7, before applying SALLO.

Q. *Will non-teaching guidance counsellors see an increase in remuneration following the settlement of the SSSCA?*

A. If their current pay is below the minimum rate of \$29.81 per hour, equivalent to \$62,175 per annum, their base remuneration will increase to that rate. If the current pay is the same as or greater than the minimum rate, then their base remuneration will remain the same. However, qualified guidance counsellors not previously covered by the SSSCA or relevant IEA are now entitled to the qualifications allowance. Guidance counsellors may also be entitled to other allowances available under the SSSCA, if applicable.

On 23 March 2027, guidance counsellors will be eligible for increases to the printed rates in the SSSCA, in the same manner as other support staff.

Q. *Will schools receive funding to support the addition of non-teaching guidance counsellors on to the SSSCA?*

A: Additional funding will be provided quarterly to cover the increased costs of non-teaching guidance counsellors in the SSSCA.

Q. *My guidance counsellor has requested that I review their salary. What do I need to do?*

A. Employees have always had the ability to request a salary review. Advice can be sought from Gov Hub (formerly NZSBA) on conducting salary reviews and factors to consider.

Q *Does backdating apply for guidance counsellors?*

A For guidance counsellors paid under the new minimum rate, the difference between their previous pay and the new minimum rate will be paid backdated to 24 March 2026 for union members, and to the date of signing a new IEA for non-union members. The majority of guidance counsellors are translating on their current rate of pay, which is more than the minimum rate, so it's not anticipated backdating of salary will apply for most.

However, those who move to the CA or relevant IEA for the first time have new eligibility for allowances. Those allowances can be backdated to 24 March 2026 for those on the CA, or from the date the IEA was signed for non-union members.

Q. *When do I make the translation for guidance counsellors?*

A. The guidance counsellor designation code and SSSCA implementation will be live on EdPay from 23 June 2026. Payroll actions can be completed then. For union members, provisions will apply from the CA settlement, 24 March 2026. The IEA can be offered to guidance counsellors immediately and the new provisions will apply from the date it is signed by the parties.

Q *When will the changes be implemented by EdPay?*

A These will be implemented by EdPay on 23 June 2026.

Q *Are there any other changes for guidance counsellors?*

A. For those not previously placed on the SSSCA or the IEA, non-teaching guidance counsellors, covered either by the SSSCA or the 15 April IEA will have access to the improved conditions of those agreements. These include the qualifications allowance, overtime rates, Easter Tuesday, enhanced annual leave after five years of service and surplus staffing provisions.

Q. *My guidance counsellor was already employed on the SSSCA/SSSCA based IEA, do I have to do anything?*

A. If your guidance counsellor was placed by the school on the SSSCA or SSSCA IEA previously, you will need to move them to the “other positions” pay scale in part 3E, if not already there, and ensure they are paid not less than the minimum rate for qualified or unqualified guidance counsellors. If qualified, they must be placed on the qualified guidance counsellor designation code: S98.

Q. *What is required for annual salary reviews for those on the ‘range of rates’?*

A: The collective agreement states:

3E.5.2 Where the employee is paid on the Grade D range of rates, the employer will review the employee’s salary annually. This review, which is not required if the employee has reached the top of the range (i.e. the highest rate in the Grade), will be carried out after discussion with the employee.

The employer will take into account whether the employee has met or exceeded standards of performance as assessed by the employer against the job description and/or written requirements of the position in reviewing the salary.

Other factors which the employer will take into account are:

- (i) particular skills, qualifications, on the job experience and level of responsibility;*

- (ii) *the ease or difficulty in recruiting and/or retaining the specific skills and/or experience required for the position;*
- (iii) *whether the current salary level is commensurate with the duties required;*
- (iv) *salary rates shall not be reduced by reason of the operation of the ranges of rates.*

3E.5.3 Where an employee wishes to have their salary review reconsidered, they shall refer the matter to the school board. The employee shall have the right to representation at any stage.