



Information for students and their families and whānau

Vocational Education and Training factsheet, June 2026

There have been changes to the vocational education and training (VET) system across provider-based and work-based delivery since 1 January 2026.

These changes include:

Provider-based delivery

- Te Pūkenga has been renamed the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST) and is winding down its operations. It will be disestablished in early 2027. (Te Pūkenga was established in 2021 as a national network for all polytechnics and industry training organisations).
- Ten polytechnics were established in late 2025 and transferred their operations out of Te Pūkenga to become stand-alone polytechnics on 1 January 2026. These are:
 - Ara Institute of Canterbury (Ara)
 - Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT)
 - Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT)
 - Southern Institute of Technology (SIT)
 - Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology
 - Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec)
 - Manukau Institute of Technology and Unitec as a merged institution
 - Otago Polytechnic
 - Universal College of Learning (UCOL)
 - The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand.
- NorthTec, the Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki (WITT), and Whitireia/WeITec will become stand-alone polytechnics on 1 January 2027.
- The operations of Tai Poutini Polytechnic on the West Coast of the South Island will be transferred to be managed by the Open Polytechnic, from 1 January 2027.

Work-based delivery

- Eight Industry Skills Boards (ISBs) were established on 1 January 2026 to replace Workforce Development Councils as the standard setters for industry. The ISBs role is to make sure qualifications are relevant to employers.
- Seven work-based learning divisions are temporarily hosted by ISBs. BCITO (building and construction related industries) and MITO (covering automotive, commercial road transport, extractives, drilling, gas and logistics industries) became Private Training Establishments (PTEs) on 1 January 2026. HITO (hair beauty therapy and barbering sector) will transition to a PTE from 1 July 2026, and the remaining work-based learning provision will transition to PTEs by 31 December 2027.

How do these changes affect me?

- Since January 2026, the Tertiary Education Commission and NZIST are managing the changes to the VET system to support current programmes throughout the transition period (ending in early 2027).
- Some changes to course availability may occur and some polytechnic campuses or distance sites may close, but your school will be informed by the polytechnic well in advance of any changes or decisions made.
- Work-based learning divisions will continue to support learners throughout the transition process to PTEs and will ensure any impacts on learners are communicated in a timely manner.

What does this mean for the current pathways from secondary school to tertiary vocational education and training?

- Secondary-tertiary programmes like Trades Academies are expected to continue as usual, but be led by newly established stand-alone polytechnics or ISBs (temporarily housing work-based learning divisions).
- Trades Academies help secondary school students to learn both at schools and with tertiary providers like polytechnics. Some Trades Academies are led by individual schools and some by tertiary providers.
- Each polytechnic or ISB, that leads a Trades Academy, will communicate directly with your school about any changes to the programme. Therefore, students will likely not notice much difference in terms of delivery, and credits earned will still count towards qualifications.
- ISBs will lead the development of industry informed subjects that enable achievement of NCEA through vocational education and training.
- The Government is changing NCEA this year and your teachers will have information about this.
- The [Ministry of Education's website](#) has a video on how these changes will affect the VET sector.

Will there be opportunities for hands-on learning or apprenticeships in my local area?

- It is expected that students in all regions will have access to a mix of both on-campus and off-campus (on the job) learning options.
- Talk to your school's careers, STAR, Gateway or Trades Academy advisor. Students wanting to take up apprenticeships or traineeships can continue to seek out these opportunities, confident that the on-campus learning elements will continue to be delivered either in the classroom or online, or a mix of both.

How can I have certainty before I enrol in a polytechnic?

- If you have questions - talk to your careers advisor at school when you are thinking about enrolling.
- It is normal for tertiary institutions like polytechnics to change programmes from time to time and they have systems to ensure students are looked after when that happens.
- Any programmes that are going to stop will be taught through to the end of the course.

What if I am a student who requires additional support?

- All tertiary providers have student support services and will continue to receive funding for students that require extra support with their learning.

Where can I get information and support for making decisions?

- Talk to your school's careers, STAR, Gateway advisor and your teachers about your career and study interests and options.
- All polytechnics have websites with helpful info - you can also email, ring or visit your local one.
- Helpful career information is also on the Tertiary Education Commission's [Tahatū Career Navigator website](#).
- [Ministry of Education's website](#) has regular updates about the VET changes.
- The [Tertiary Education Commission's website](#) has information on everything you need to know about the VET sector.
- [New Zealand Qualifications Authority's website](#) has information about the tertiary sector and finding qualifications to study.
- [How to pay for study - StudyLink's](#) website has all the information you need regarding student loans and other financial support.



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te Mātauranga**
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