



Information for schools & wharekura

Vocational Education and Training Factsheet, June 2026

What staff and schools need to know about the VET changes

- The Government's changes to the vocational education and training (VET) tertiary system, including for Te Pūkenga, polytechnics and work-based providers, started on 1 January 2026.

The changes are:

- Te Pūkenga's operations have been significantly reduced. It has been renamed the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST) and will be fully disestablished in early 2027.

Provider-based delivery

- Regional polytechnics have been established as stand-alone institutions and a federation of polytechnics has also been established. The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand is the anchor polytechnic that will support the Federation Committee (made up of representatives of the designated federation polytechnics), to provide shared programmes and resources to support efficient delivery.
- Since 1 January 2026, ten independent regional polytechnics are operational. 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.

Work-based delivery

- Eight Industry Skills Boards (ISBs) have been established to replace Workforce Development Councils and cover the broad areas of transport; construction and specialist trades; food and fibre; energy and infrastructure; manufacturing and engineering; services; education, health and community; and electrotechnology and information technology and creative industries.
- Seven work-based learning divisions are temporarily hosted by ISBs, and two others transitioned to become Private Training Establishments (PTEs) on 1 January 2026. All work-based learning provision will transition to PTEs by 31 December 2027.
- Learners will continue to be supported by these work-based learning divisions, and the work-based learning PTEs throughout the transition.

What does this mean for our school?

- While the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) and NZIST are managing the overall transition process, each school needs to make contact with their regional polytechnic to find out about any local programme or course changes that may affect current or future students.
- Some polytechnic campuses or distance sites may close but that will be up to each polytechnic.
- There are no significant changes to vocational learning in schools. The delivery of VET, Trades Academies and other secondary-tertiary programmes continues but may be led by a stand-alone regional polytechnic where it used to be led by Te Pūkenga.
- Students will continue to have clear pathways into polytechnics, Wānanga and Private Training Establishments.
- Standard setting and qualification development for secondary to tertiary transition programmes like Gateway and Trades Academies will be supported by the relevant Industry Skills Board through their standard setting function, and will be delivered through schools, employers and tertiary education organisations as usual.
- NCEA credits from vocational programmes remain valid and will continue to count towards qualifications.
- 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.

What do schools need to know about work-based learners and apprentices who are studying through a PTE?

- A small number of TEC-funded PTEs deliver work-based learning. They will continue enrolling learners within their annual funding limits, as extra funding is not guaranteed.
- NZQA approves organisations to become registered PTEs. TEC decides whether their programmes receive government funding, informed by advice from Industry Skills Boards (ISBs).
- Industry Skills Boards will work with employers to identify future work-based learning needs and help shape the range of providers required.
- There are no expected changes for apprentices currently enrolled with a polytechnic. TEC is developing future arrangements for managed apprenticeships and will keep schools informed as this work progresses.

Where can I get information about these changes?

- All polytechnics and PTEs have websites with helpful info and contact details.
- Career information for students is provided on Tertiary Education Commission's [Tahatū Career Navigator website](#).
- The [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 and tertiary sector.
- The [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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