

# Regulation of the Teaching Workforce

Supporting safe, high-quality teaching and learning

**Aotearoa New Zealand has a shared regulatory system for the teaching workforce. The system aims to ensure teachers are qualified, competent and fit to practise, leading to improved safety and learning outcomes.**

The Ministry of Education (the Ministry) is the steward of the education system. We shape an education system that delivers equitable and excellent outcomes for all learners. We are now responsible for setting, maintaining and reviewing the standards that apply to teachers and teacher training providers:

- standards for qualifications that lead to teacher registration (Initial Teacher Education Programme Requirements)
- expectations teachers must meet to enter and remain in the profession (teacher registration and practising certificate criteria)
- standards for on-going teaching practice (Standards for the Teaching Profession)
- ethical and conduct expectations (Code of Professional Responsibility).

You can find these standards on our [website](#)

As system steward, we monitor and evaluate how well these standards and other policy and regulatory settings are working across the education system.

The Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (the Teaching Council) applies the standards set by the Ministry when making independent regulatory decisions:

- approving ITE programmes and assuring quality of ITE programmes (ITE programme approval, monitoring, and review processes)
- determining who can teach (registration and practising certification processes)
- dealing with competence and conduct that does not meet the expectations for the teaching profession (disciplinary processes).

You can find more information on the Teaching Council's [website](#) about how to:

- apply for ITE programme approval
- register to teach or apply for a Limited Authority to Teach (LAT)
- apply for, or renew, a practising certificate
- report or make a complaint about a teacher's competence or conduct.

The Ministry and Teaching Council work together to ensure that:

- teachers and teacher training providers are clear about what is expected of them
- standards are workable in practice and achieve their policy intent.

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### Why has the Government changed who sets standards?

Moving standard-setting functions to the Ministry supports alignment between regulation of the teaching profession and broader government education policies and priorities, particularly curriculum goals and workforce requirements to support quality teaching.

Locating this function within the Ministry also supports its role as system steward. It enables a system-level view of how standards work in conjunction with other policy and regulatory settings and how they can be improved over time.

### Is the Teaching Council still independent?

Yes. The Teaching Council continues to make independent regulatory decisions about whether to approve teacher training programmes, who can teach, and how to deal with competence and conduct that is below the expected standards.

### What has changed?

The Ministry of Education is now responsible for setting, maintaining and reviewing the regulatory standards that apply to teachers and teacher training providers. You can now find the standards that apply to teachers and teacher training providers on the Ministry's [website](#).

### Was there consultation on these changes?

Yes.

- In 2024, the Ministry consulted on proposed changes to the Teaching Council's functions.
- In 2025, Parliament's Education and Workforce Select Committee considered public submissions on the legislation, including the change to standard-setting responsibilities.

### What does this mean for teachers or teacher training providers

Teachers continue to register and apply for (or renew) practising certificates, or apply for a limited authority to teach through the Teaching Council. The Teaching Council continues to be responsible for dealing with serious competence and conduct concerns.

ITE providers continue to apply to the Teaching Council for ITE programme approval and the Teaching Council will continue to monitor and review those programmes.

The difference is the Ministry is now responsible for setting the standards that the Teaching Council will apply when performing its regulatory functions. Over time, those standards may change.

### Do the current standards still apply?

Yes. All existing standards remain in place until the Ministry changes them. The standards must now be reviewed every 7 years unless there is a good reason to review them sooner.

### How will the sector be involved in any changes to standards?

The sector will be involved in any changes to standards through ongoing engagement and targeted consultation.

The Ministry works closely with the Teaching Council and education system leaders, recognising their regulatory, quality assurance, and professional expertise. The Ministry also seeks advice from the Teaching Standards Expert Advisory Group and engages with sector representatives, including employee organisations, Deans of Education, early childhood organisations, initial teacher education providers, and other relevant experts.

This engagement ensures that the practical realities of teaching and learning are reflected in any proposed changes. It helps identify emerging issues early, understand potential impacts across the system, and ensure proposals are evidence-based, workable, and informed by professional experience.

The Education and Training Act 2020 requires the Ministry to consult with the Teaching Council and sector representative organisations before changing or amending any standard, code, or requirement. When changes are being considered, the Ministry will undertake targeted consultation with those best placed to provide informed feedback, ensuring a range of perspectives are considered.

Feedback received through consultation will be considered carefully and transparently. Submissions and a summary of how feedback has informed decision-making will be published, providing visibility of the issues raised and the rationale for any decisions made.

Throughout the process, the Ministry and the Teaching Council will work together to provide clear, consistent communication and support. This collaborative approach will help ensure that any future changes to standards are practical, well understood, and developed with the confidence and involvement of the profession.

### **How will any changes be communicated and implemented?**

The Ministry and the Teaching Council will work closely together to ensure any changes to standards are communicated clearly and implemented effectively across the education system.

The Ministry will publish any updated standards and supporting guidance and will work with sector partners to raise awareness and build understanding of the changes. This may include a range of communication and engagement activities to help educators, providers, employers, and other stakeholders understand what is changing and what it means in practice.

The Teaching Council will be responsible for implementing any regulatory changes required to give effect to the updated standards. This includes reviewing and updating its policies, processes, systems, and guidance, and communicating the practical implications for teachers, professional leaders, and initial teacher education providers.

Throughout implementation, the Ministry and the Teaching Council will coordinate communications and support activities to ensure messages are clear, consistent, and timely. This will help provide the sector with the information and guidance needed to confidently understand and apply any changes.

### **Will the Standards for the Teaching Profession change soon?**

The Ministry must review all standards (including the Standards for the Teaching Profession) at least every 7 years.

The Ministry's initial focus is reviewing the standards for qualifications that lead to teacher registration (the ITE programme requirements) to ensure graduates are well prepared for a range of learning environments. Any changes to other standards will be considered later.

Implementation of the 2026 Standards for the Teaching Profession will continue as planned. Teachers, professional leaders and employers should continue to work with existing implementation timeframes for the 2026 Standards for the Teaching Profession, the Professional Growth Cycle expectations and Teaching Council processes unless advised otherwise.

Website: [Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand](#)

Website: [Ministry of Education Teaching Standards](#)

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