

Review of Initial Teacher Education Programme Requirements

A REVIEW CONTEXT

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) prepares people to become teachers

ITE prepares people to become qualified and registered teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand. ITE gives student teachers the knowledge, skills, and experience to begin teaching with confidence in early childhood, primary, and secondary education.

Requirements set expectations for ITE programmes

The ITE Programme Requirements (the requirements) set out what ITE programmes must do, including requirements for:

- programme design and delivery
- programme quality
- student assessment
- what graduates must demonstrate before completing their programme.

Why we are reviewing the requirements

Responsibility for the requirements has moved from the Teaching Council to the Ministry of Education. The 2026 Standards for the Teaching Profession have also been updated, alongside changes to the curriculum and an increased focus on child safety and wellbeing. Together, these changes provide an opportunity to make sure the requirements continue to support high-quality teacher education.

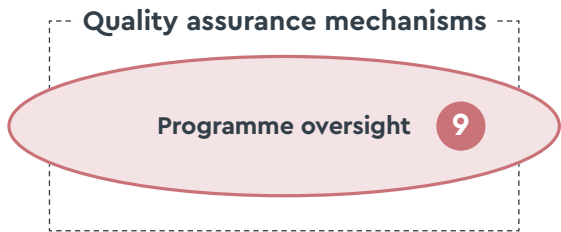
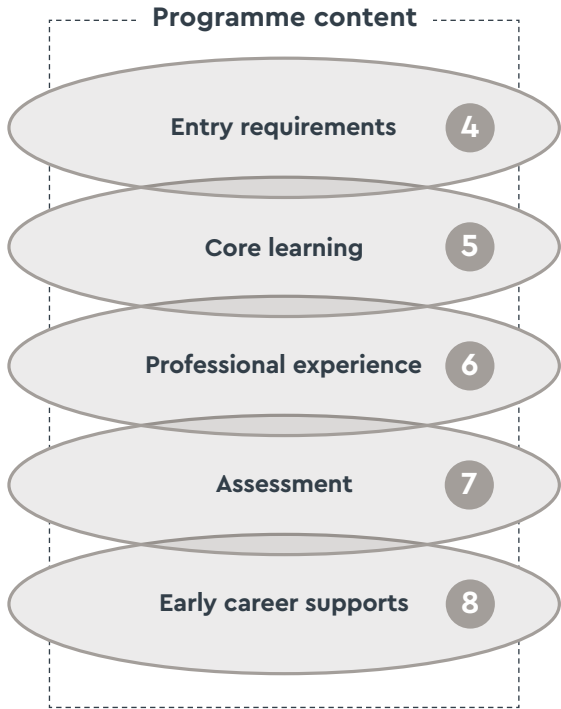
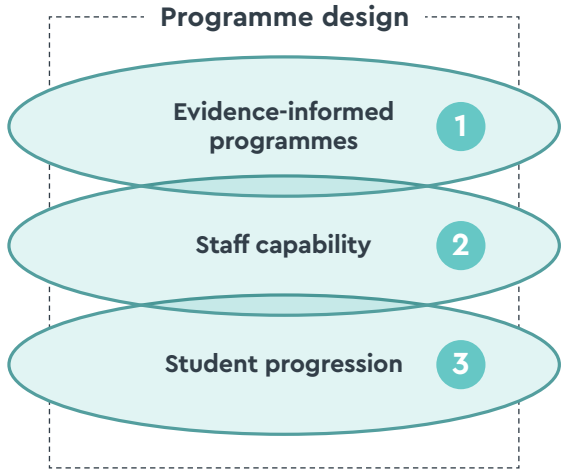
B OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

The review has identified nine opportunities to strengthen ITE across three key areas:

- Programme design
- Programme content
- Quality assurance mechanisms

Five principles informed the review:

- 1** **Aligning** with contemporary evidence in effective teaching.
- 2** **Responding** to the Aotearoa New Zealand context, with a genuine commitment to te ao Māori.
- 3** **Recognising** the diversity of learners.
- 4** **Balancing** programme consistency with contextualisation.
- 5** **Applying** good regulatory practice.



ITE FOCUS AREA 1: PROGRAMME DESIGN

- 1 Be clearer about how evidence informs programme design**
Clearly define what counts as evidence and how programmes should use it. Recognise different forms of evidence, including research, mātauranga Māori, kaupapa Māori evidence, and professional expertise.
- 2 Take a broader view of staff capability**
Expect ITE staff to keep their professional knowledge and practice current, and engage with relevant evidence. Research is one way to show capability, alongside practice expertise, professional learning, and engagement with schools, kura, and early learning services.
- 3 Show how student teachers progress through their programme**
Ask providers to clearly show how learning builds from entry to graduation. This should bring together learning, professional experience, assessment, support, and the different needs and strengths of student teachers.

ITE FOCUS AREA 2: PROGRAMME CONTENT

- 4 Improve consistency in how entry requirements are assessed**
Retain the current entry requirements, while making assessment more consistent across providers. This could include a common approach to literacy and numeracy, alongside te reo Māori requirements and provider judgement.
- 5 Be clearer about what all student teachers need to learn**
Set a clearer core of knowledge, practices, and capabilities that all student teachers need before entering the profession. This would align with the 2026 Standards, while allowing for different early childhood, school, and kura contexts.
- 6 Set clearer expectations for professional experience**
Be clearer about what makes professional experience high quality, including placements, teaching opportunities, support, and assessment. Allow for differences across pathways while maintaining common expectations for quality.
- 7 Consider a national assessment framework**
Keep assessment led by providers, supported by a common national framework and independent moderation. This could provide greater consistency and confidence that graduates are ready to teach.
- 8 Better connect ITE with early career support**
Prepare student teachers for the move into teaching, including induction, mentoring, certification, and ongoing professional learning. Create a clearer link between what teachers learn during ITE and the support they receive early in their careers.

ITE FOCUS AREA 3: QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS

- 9 Make programme oversight more consistent**
Make programme approval, monitoring, and moderation clearer and more consistent across the country. This could strengthen national oversight while allowing for different contexts, including Māori immersion settings.

C EDUCATION SECTOR LEADERS AND THE ROLES THEY PLAY

The Teaching Council	Approves, monitors, and reviews ITE programmes to make sure they meet the required standards. It also checks that graduates meet the professional standards expected of new teachers.	The Ministry of Education (the Ministry)	Sets and reviews the requirements and standards for teachers and ITE providers, and monitors how well these are working across the education system.	The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)	Funds tertiary education providers, with ITE identified as a priority. Funding and investment decisions help shape the education and training that providers deliver.	Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP)	Approves and accredits university programmes, and oversees programme moderation. University ITE programmes are also subject to the Teaching Council's approval process.	New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)	Approves programmes and accredits non-university tertiary providers against national requirements. Relevant ITE programmes are also subject to the Teaching Council's approval process.
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Key statistics:



ITE providers
(September 2026)



Approved programmes
(September 2026)



Domestic teaching graduates
(June 2025)



Early learning services
(June 2025)



Schools and kura
(June 2025)