

**Tertiary Education
Commission**
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua



Learner Success Plans

Guidance for TEOs submitting Plans for
funding from 2026

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Learner Success Plans - Guidance for TEOs submitting Plans for funding in 2026

This document provides detailed guidance for tertiary education organisations (TEOs) completing either a Learner Success Plan Progress update (LSP update) or a new Learner Success Plan in 2025 for funding from 2026.

Progress updates

This section provides guidance for TEOs completing an LSP update in 2025 for funding from 2026.

Who needs to submit an LSP update?

We require an LSP update from all TEOs that:

- › are required to submit a full Investment Plan, and
- › receive \$5 million or more in TEC on-Plan funding, and
- › have already developed an LSP that was assessed with their previous Investment Plan.

The LSP update is an opportunity to update us on what you've done since you submitted your LSP.

Overview of LSP update template

The LSP Update template consists of three main sections:

- › Section 1 – progress update (what have you done, and what impact did it have?)
- › Section 2 – lessons learnt (what was the impact of the interventions you tried, have they worked?)
- › Section 3 – next steps (what are you doing next and how are your next steps informed by the lessons learnt?)

We recommend you use the [update template](#). Each section includes a number of sub-questions that provide guidance about what we expect you to report on. These are not exhaustive.

There is some overlap between sections (and sub-questions), so we will assess LSP updates holistically. Where there are similar/overlapping questions in different sections, we don't expect you to answer the question more than once.

The TEC will use the following assessment criteria, as prescribed in the current Gazette notice, to assess your LSP progress update.

[Assessment] Criteria for TEOs submitting an LSP progress update

Whether and to what extent the LSP progress update demonstrates:

- › satisfactory progress against the LSP (including what has been achieved);
- › evidence about the impacts of the interventions;
- › lessons learnt (including what has worked, what has not, and why); and
- › next steps (including how the lessons learnt will inform next steps as outlined in the roadmap, and any changes to the LSP as necessary).

These four overarching criteria map to the structure of the LSP update template. Further detailed guidance sits under these criteria.

You can find the gazette notice here - www.gazette.govt.nz/notice/id/2025-sl999

Section 1 – progress update

What we asked for

Please provide a **progress update** on what has been achieved against your LSP, including:

- › What **outcomes have you achieved** so far from the implementation of your LSP (including how you are working with your learners and staff?)
- › What **difference** has this made for learners? Provide evidence that your interventions are or are not having the intended impact.
- › How have you **addressed gaps** of educational outcomes between learner groups and lifted performance?
- › How have you **monitored progress**?

What we expect to see (assessment guidance/criteria)

This section assesses the effectiveness and impact of the implementation of your LSP and the extent to which you've achieved your LSP goals, monitored progress, and addressed capability gaps aligned with the [Learner Success Framework](#). We're looking to see what progress you have made against your LSP: whether you've done what you said you were going to do, and whether it's made a difference.

Overall progress update narrative

A clear narrative that sets out the progress you have made in implementing your LSP.

Specific things you might include:

- › What you've done and achieved since submitting the LSP. This might include details of specific initiatives or programmes trialled or implemented, with intended purpose/rationale, timelines and number of learners impacted.
- › How does this compare to what you said you were going to do? Are the projects and initiatives from the LSP? If you've done something different, provide a good, clear reason.
- › What specific changes have you made to your policies, processes etc?
- › **Outcomes achieved**

A clear description of impacts and outcomes of LSP implementation. Evidence to support the narrative might include data, reports, case studies and other relevant documents that show the progress and impact of your LSP initiatives.

Specific things you should include where possible:

- › Number of learners impacted
- › Description of changes to policies
- › Evidence of impacts, both qualitative and quantitative, eg, Educational Performance Indicators (EPIs), case studies, individual learner stories.

› **Difference for learners**

(Some of this might be included in the previous section [Outcomes achieved], but it could include more qualitative narratives.)

Specific things you might include:

- › Learner journey stories of what has changed for them. This could include academic success or other aspects of their lives that have been impacted.
- › As above, evidence of impacts, both qualitative and quantitative.

› **Addressing gaps in education outcomes**

A clear description of any particular actions/initiatives you've undertaken to close the gaps in education outcomes.

(This information might be covered in the update already. The LSP will set out a range of initiatives you will be doing to change/fix a range of issues across your organisation [and that's appropriate and necessary], but ultimately we want to see changes to outcomes.)

Specific things we'd expect to see:

- › Explicit links between initiatives and improvements to education outcomes.

› **Monitoring**

A clear description of how you have monitored your LSP programme of work and the individual initiatives.

Specific things you might include:

- › Questions asked and data collected
- › Frequency of monitoring
- › Who was responsible and accountable for monitoring
- › Frequency of reporting (and to whom).

Section 2 – lessons learnt

What we asked for

Please provide lessons you have learnt, including what has worked and what has not, in relation to your LSP, including:

- › What **interventions and initiatives** have you tried?
- › Have you evaluated these? What has been the impact?
- › What has **worked well**, and what are the main **issues or areas of concern**? Please explain why the initiatives have or have not worked. (Please align your response to the seven learner success capabilities where appropriate.)

What we expect to see (assessment guidance/criteria)

This section assesses your experiences implementing your current LSP. We want evidence of lessons from both successes and failures, including understanding what didn't work and why.

Overall lessons learnt update

A clear description of the lessons learned from implementing the LSP and how you are intentionally using these to inform project changes and developments.

› **Interventions and initiatives**

Building on the description in the previous section as appropriate, what are the specific initiatives, projects, and learner success pieces of work that you have trialled and/or implemented?

› **Evaluation**

A description of whether, and when and how, you have evaluated specific projects and initiatives. This should include a clear explanation of what worked (including how this was measured) and why.

Specific things you might include:

- › Description of specific evaluation methodologies
- › Frequency of evaluation
- › Metrics used in evaluation.

› **What worked well, or issues and areas of concern**

Building on the description of the evaluation, more specific detail on the projects/initiatives that worked well or didn't. We'd expect to see a clear understanding of the reasons behind the success or failure of projects/initiatives.

Specific things you might include:

- › A narrative demonstrating a good appreciation and understanding of why specific projects and interventions worked or not
- › Use of specific planning tools such as intervention logic, theory of change or programme theory, which show expected outputs and outcomes of interventions.

Section 3 – next steps

What we asked for

Provide an overview of the next steps, including:

- › What is the **next stage of your LSP** to be implemented? How does this align to the stages of the Learner Success Framework? What new initiatives and projects are you going to undertake?
- › How are the outcomes and lessons learnt from previous work in implementing your LSP **informing the next steps outlined in your roadmap**?
- › Do you already have a **target date for achieving your vision** of learner success (including how you will address gaps of education outcomes between learner groups)? If not, please provide one. If you do, has this changed (and why)?
- › What **changes, if any, are you making to your LSP**? Please explain why you are making these changes.

What we expect to see (assessment guidance/criteria)

This section assesses your forward-looking strategy as articulated in your LSP. This includes how well you have outlined the future steps in the Learner Success Framework and your ongoing journey towards achieving learner success.

Overall next steps update

Demonstration of your preparedness and strategic direction for ongoing and future success, based on your:

- › clarity about the next stage of the Learner Success Framework to be implemented, and the feasibility of implementing this
- › outcomes and experiences from previous stages being used to inform future steps
- › definitions of success for both the learners and the organisation.
- › **Next stage (and alignment with Learner Success Framework)**
Description of what you are doing next to implement your LSP. We'd like to see details of projects/initiatives, with timelines, resourcing and measures of success.
Specific things you might include:
 - › How the next stage builds on previous work
 - › Whether this aligns clearly to stages of the Learner Success Framework
 - › Whether it includes specific budget and resource committed to the work.
- › **Outcomes informing next steps**
Description of how outcomes and evaluation of initiatives have been incorporated into the next phases of the learner success work.
Specific things you might include:
 - › Explicit statements such as “we trialled programme **x** in 2024. It worked/did not work because of **y**. Based on this outcome we made **z** changes to the project, which will be rolled out in 2026.”

› **Target date**

In our first LSP template we didn't explicitly ask TEOs for a target date when they might expect to achieve their learner success vision (including addressing gaps of education outcomes between learner groups), though many did provide one. If you don't currently have a target date, we expect you to include one in the LSP update. If you do have a target date, we expect you to tell us whether this has changed, and if so, why (linked clearly to previous sections in the LSP update).

› **Changes to LSP**

If there are changes to the LSP, either proposed or already made, clearly flag these. We expect to see a logical explanation of why you have made (or proposed) the changes.

New Learner Success Plan

This section provides guidance for TEOs completing a new Learner Success Plan (LSP) in 2025 for funding from 2026.

Who needs to submit a new LSP?

We require a new LSP from all TEOs that:

- › are required to submit a full Investment Plan, and
- › receive \$5 million or more in TEC on-Plan funding, and
- › have not already developed an LSP that was assessed with their previous investment plan.

Overview of the LSP template

The LSP template consists of three main sections:

- › Section 1 – future state (ie, a short vision statement of your long-term goal[s] for improving education outcomes for all learners)
- › Section 2 – current state (ie, a snapshot of current learner performance, including data and evidence)
- › Section 3 – a roadmap (ie, an overview of a project plan which demonstrates how you will get from the current state to the future state).

Each section includes a number of sub-questions that provide guidance about what we expect you to report on. While recommended, these are not mandatory or exhaustive.

There is some overlap between sections (and sub-questions), so we will assess LSPs holistically. Where there are similar/overlapping questions in different sections, we don't expect you to answer the question more than once.

The TEC will use the following assessment criteria, as prescribed in the current Gazette notice, to assess your LSP.

[Assessment] Criteria for TEOs submitting a new LSP

Whether and to what extent the LSP demonstrates:

- › a clear commitment by the TEO's governance and management to implementing the LSP;
- › a whole of organisation approach;
- › a description of the current state of learner success and a roadmap for improving outcomes for all learners, in particular, learners most in need;
- › a clear alignment to Learner Success Framework; and
- › a well-defined implementation approach (including outcomes, measures and reporting).

The Gazette notice can be found here - <http://www.gazette.govt.nz/notice/id/2025-sl999>

Section 1 – future state

What we asked for

Please provide a **short vision statement** of your long-term goal(s) for addressing gaps of educational outcomes between learner groups.

What we expect to see

The sort of information we expect to see in this section includes a summary of:

- › How you are **addressing the gaps** between different learner groups, for example, those from low socio-economic backgrounds, with low prior achievement, or who are disabled¹, neurodiverse, Māori and/or Pacific.
- › **What does success look like** for your organisation and your learners? (We're also asking you to include a specific **target date** for achieving this vision.)
- › How well does the vision **represent the aspirations of your stakeholders**?
- › How is the vision **owned and driven by your Council/Board** and executive leadership team?
- › What do you see as the long-term issues that will need to be addressed?

Specific details related to the key themes

Governance commitment

- › LSP is formally approved by Board/Council.
- › An outline of TEO governance contribution to the LSP development – reference to active engagement.
- › Vision statement demonstrates commitment by Board/Council to solving problems and addressing education gaps between learner groups.

Leadership commitment

- › Explicit connections to the TEO's wider strategic and organisational documents, eg, business plans, reporting and monitoring frameworks.

Whole-of-organisation approach

- › Stakeholders, eg, staff, learners, mana whenua, communities, employers, etc, with reference to engagement process, eg, list of the types of meetings, etc, and an outline of how kōrero informed and/or changed the vision.

Alignment to Learner Success Framework

- › Vision statement may reference maturity of specific learner success capabilities.

Well-defined implementation approach (including outcomes, measures and reporting)

- › Includes a specific target date for addressing gaps of educational outcomes between learner groups.

¹ You can describe your approach to addressing gaps for neurodiverse and disabled learners in your Disability Action Plan, if you have one.

Section 2 – current state

What we asked for

Please provide a snapshot of **current learner performance**, including data and evidence.

What we expect to see

The sort of information we expect to see in this section includes a summary of:

- › Problem definition: Using the seven learner success capabilities, please identify the current main issues or areas of concern in relation to you supporting your learners to succeed.
- › Do you **understand the cause(s)** of these issues? What **evidence** do you have?
- › What **interventions and initiatives have you already tried**? Have you **evaluated** these, and why have they worked or not worked?
- › If you are already undertaking specific learner success work:
 - › **what stage of the Learner Success Framework** are you at?
 - › if you are beyond Stage One: Preparing for Success, what **specifically have you done** (including budget and resourcing)?
 - › **who owns this work** at the executive leadership level, and how is it being managed?
 - › What have been the outcomes of your learner success projects? Do you report progress to your Council or Board?

Specific details related to the key themes

Governance commitment

- › May include evidence of regular LSP reporting to the Board.

Leadership commitment

- › May include evidence of learner-success-related key performance indicators (KPIs) for CE and executive leadership team.

Whole-of-organisation approach

- › Evidence of inclusion of learner success initiatives in the work programmes of your faculty and departments.
- › Learner-success-related KPIs for staff and/or relevant professional development.
- › Regular learner success communications across your TEO.

Alignment to Learner Success Framework

- › Problems/challenges are described in terms of learner success capabilities.

Well-defined implementation approach (including outcomes, measures and reporting)

- › Information that is specific and detailed, including EPIs (that we can mirror) and supporting data that underpins the problem narrative to show you have done some in-depth analysis.
- › Evidence to show that you have triangulated data, research and/or other evidence that supports the narrative.
- › Have you undertaken root-cause analysis? For example, we would be looking for an accurate understanding of EPI data, also some attempt to flesh out why the data is what

it is, eg, are the issues linked to outdated teaching practices, website issues, or an inefficient enrolment process?

Section 3 – a roadmap

What we asked for

Please provide an **overview of a project plan** which demonstrates how you will get from the current state to the future state.

What we expect to see

The sort of information we expect to see in this section includes a summary of:

- › What is the **next stage of the Learner Success Framework** to be implemented? How have the **outcomes from previous stages** (if any) informed the next steps? Is there anything you would do differently?
- › Detail a roadmap including **timelines, milestones, deliverables, targets, measures and resources**.
- › How does the roadmap **link to the problem definition** in Section 2, ie, why are you doing these specific things? Your roadmap plans must align with Learner Success Framework stages and the seven learner success capabilities.
- › How will **you monitor progress**? This includes who will be **accountable** for progress and achievement of milestones.
- › What are the specific medium- to long-term **goals, targets and measures**?
- › Who has been involved in developing the roadmap, targets and measures, including any external **stakeholders**?

Specific details related to the key themes

Governance commitment

- › The LSP has been well considered and approved by your Board or Council, as evidenced by reference to governance documents.

Leadership commitment

- › Accountability to implement the LSP sits with a senior leader and progress is regularly reviewed by Senior Management Team or equivalent.

Whole-of-organisation approach

- › Evidence of a whole-of-organisation reporting and monitoring framework, eg, LSP reports are scheduled to your Council or Board, executive leadership team (ELT), faculty and departments.
- › Project structure includes membership from a relevant and broad range of your staff as well as stakeholders as appropriate (including learners).
- › Project plans include commitment to meaningful consultation with relevant stakeholders, including learners.

Alignment to Learner Success Framework

- › Roadmap stages and activities align to where you are at on your journey, related to the Learner Success Framework and learner success capabilities.

- › The Learner Success Diagnostic Tool is, or will be, used to drive actions and interventions.

Well-defined implementation approach (including outcomes, measures and reporting)

- › Roadmap shows how progress will be made, and measured, toward the goal/vision statement.
- › Evidence that you have identified or are working towards identifying and monitoring lead outcome indicators, eg, increased course completion rates in courses that are known to have a significant impact on a learner's success. LSP outcomes are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic/Relevant, Timebound).
- › Evidence that investment (budget, and resourcing) is available to deliver on the LSP.