



**Tertiary Education
Commission**
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua



Supplementary Plan Guidance

**For providers submitting Investment Plans
for funding from 1 January 2027**

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Supplementary Plan Guidance contains additional information for investment from 2027

Supplementary Plan Guidance includes up-to-date information for investment from 2027 and should be read alongside [Plan Guidance \(PDF 11.3 MB\)](#).

This guidance details key Budget 2026 decisions and provides an update on new investment information, including:

- › Budget 2026 support for tertiary education
- › an outline of our performance expectations
- › fund-specific information for investment in 2027
- › changes under way for Initial Teacher Education (ITE)
- › how artificial intelligence (AI) is supporting investment assessment processes.

Your proposed Plan must set out how you will give effect to the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES)

The [Tertiary Education Strategy 2025–2030 \(TES\) \(PDF 1.3 MB\)](#) focuses on ensuring a strong tertiary education system that supports an innovative, prosperous and educated New Zealand. It highlights the tertiary education system's contribution to broader national goals and sets out the Government's current and medium-term priorities to achieve this.

Our expectations for implementing the five TES priorities are outlined in [Plan Guidance \(PDF 11.3 MB\)](#), pp. 17–19. For further guidance to support you to respond to the TES in your Plan, see the Strategic Intent template.

Investment for 2027 will be prioritised to maximise value

High levels of demand are forecast for 2027, and we do not expect to be able to fund all demand. Our investment will require trade-offs and careful prioritisation to maximise the value of public investment for learners, communities and the economy.

Additional funding in Budget 2026 will enable the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) to fund 99% of forecast demand. Funding will continue to be directed to priority areas in preference to non-priority provision or where learner outcomes are poor.

Our funding decisions need to recognise that additional funding through Budget 2026 is time limited. We must also be able to respond to changing learner demand in the future (eg, work-based learning increases). We will therefore look to allocate additional funding for one-year periods rather than baselining it into future allocations. This will ensure flexibility to direct funding to changing priority areas in the future.

A good Investment Plan is critical. [Plan Guidance \(PDF 11.3 MB\)](#) explains our investment approach and Plan requirements in more detail.

Budget 2026 supports tertiary education

Volume funding to support increased demand

Budget 2026 provides \$234 million in additional funding over the next two years to continue to support enrolments in tertiary education and training. This funding will enable TEC to fund 99% of forecast tertiary education and training enrolments in 2026 and 2027. This initiative also provides \$10.5 million in Equity funding to meet increased demand over the next four years.

Removal of final-year Fees Free

The Government is reprioritising some funding from the final-year Fees Free scheme to provide \$156 million in funding over four years to better support young adults from all over New Zealand to progress to tertiary education. The final-year Fees Free scheme will close from the end of December 2026, with those who complete a qualification in 2026 remaining eligible to claim their fees within 12 months of completion, up to 31 December 2027.

Funding to support increased Youth Guarantee learners

Budget 2026 provides \$86.9 million to support additional Youth Guarantee learners. This additional funding will support an extra 1,000 equivalent full-time students (EFTS) for Youth Guarantee annually, increasing from 4,500 to 5,500 from 2026. Youth Guarantee helps build employability skills and reduces the number of young people not in education, employment or training.

Funding to support increased Trades Academies

Budget 2026 also reprioritises \$69.1 million from the final-year Fees Free policy to double the number of places for senior secondary students in Trades Academies. Funded places will rise from around 10,000 currently to around 20,000 by 2030. The increase in funding responds to currently unmet demand for Trades Academies programmes with new funding phased in from 2027. Trades Academies enable more secondary school learners to pursue a career in trades or technology.

Tuition subsidy increases for foundation education

This initiative provides an additional \$24.5 million over the next four years to increase tuition and training subsidies by 2% for foundation education provision from 1 January 2027. All other tuition and training subsidies remain unchanged.

Allowance for Annual Maximum Fee Movement

This initiative further supports tertiary education providers to manage cost pressures and maintain the quality of delivery by funding predicted costs to the Student Loan Scheme from allowing providers to increase fees by up to 6% in 2027. The Minister for Tertiary Education will consult on a proposed Annual Maximum Fee Movement rate of 6% for 2027 in June 2026.

Support for Industry Skills Boards

This initiative provides \$3 million of time-limited and targeted funding in 2026/27 to support Industry Skills Boards' (ISBs) Strategic Workforce Analysis and Planning function during their initial establishment. This funding will deliver on industry expectations of secondary school leavers, ways to improve apprenticeship uptake and completions, and support for workforce data infrastructure. This initiative supplements core public funding of \$30m per annum for the eight ISBs.

Introducing a funding cap on international PhD students

The Government is considering a new funding model for international PhD students. To allow time for the review, funding for university PhD students will be capped in 2027. The funding cap for 2027 will result in a small reduction in funding compared to 2026 levels. The Ministry of Education will consult on new settings for international PhD students later in the year.

We will allocate volume and tuition subsidy increases through the usual investment process

TEC will allocate volume funding and tuition subsidy increases through our usual investment processes. As in previous years, providers do not need to amend Plan submissions because of these changes.

Further information

For further information on the Government's Budget for 2026, see [Government budget announcements](#).



Key changes for investment
from 2027

Outline of our performance expectations

The table below provides an outline of our performance expectations detailed on pp. 29–34 of [Plan Guidance \(PDF 11.3 MB\)](#). We expect to see improving trends above the minimum thresholds.

All providers must continue to address gaps in achievement between different groups of learners, especially where outcome trends are static or declining. Performance thresholds are part of a holistic assessment with consideration given to student cohorts and other factors.

For the improvement thresholds, our assessment will consider multiple years of data and the most recent trends.

Area of provision	Educational performance indicator (EPI) measure	Above minimum threshold	Improvement threshold
Level 7 degree (DQ7-10)	› Course completion	70%	80%
	› Qualification completion	50%	50–60% ¹
	› First-year retention	70%	75%
Levels 8–10 (DQ7-10)	Maintain or improve current course and qualification completion rates Focus is on addressing disparity in achievement between learner groups		
DQ3-7 work-based	› Credit achievement	50%	78%
	› Programme completion	50%	57%
	› First-year retention – NZ Apprenticeships	60%	66%
DQ3-7 provider-based	› Course completion	50%	78%
	› Qualification completion	50%	58%
	› First-year retention	55%	61%
Youth Guarantee – Level 1	› Course completion	55%	75%
	› Qualification completion	40%	61%
Youth Guarantee – Level 2	› Course completion	60%	75%
	› Qualification completion	40%	63%
Youth Guarantee – Level 3	› Course completion	70%	79%
	› Qualification completion	60%	72%
DQ Levels 1 and 2 (DQ 1-2)	› Course completion	50%	75%
	› Qualification completion	50%	56%

¹ A range is indicated as application of the threshold is dependent on cohort size, network of provision and priority considerations.

Fund-specific information for investment in 2027

Additional funding processes for 2027 vary based on the fund

The approach to additional funding requests (AFRs) is fund-specific. Key factors include available funding, fund intent and performance history. Where funding allows, we will consider growth in investment for providers that have shown strong past performance delivering priority provision.

Tertiary education organisations (TEOs) should develop their Plans under the assumption that additional funding may not be available.

You can apply for additional funding for five foundation education funds

We will consider 2027 investment round AFRs for the following funds:

- › Intensive Literacy and Numeracy Fund (ILN)
- › Adult and Community Education (ACE) in Tertiary Education Institutions (TEIs)
- › English Language Teaching Intensive Literacy and Numeracy Fund (ELT ILN)
- › English Language Teaching Refugee English Fund (Refugee English)
- › Youth Guarantee.

Application forms for these funds are available on our website at [Guidance to develop your Investment Plan – Templates](#). You must submit these forms at the same time as your 2027 Investment Plan documents, by **3 July 2026** via email and [DXP Ngā Kete](#).

For 2027 investment, there is no additional funding available for the following funds:

- › ACE in Communities
- › ACE in Schools
- › TEO-led Workplace Literacy and Numeracy Fund.

We will contact you directly if you meet our criteria for additional DQ funding

For the 2027 investment round, we will again be taking a targeted approach to additional funding for the Delivery at Levels 3 to 7 (non-degree) on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF) and all industry training (DQ3-7) Fund, and the Delivery at Levels 7 (degree) to 10 on the NZQCF (DQ7-10) Fund.

We will also use a targeted approach for the Delivery at Levels 1 and 2 on the NZQCF (DQ1-2) Fund, if additional funding becomes available.

In 2026 or 2027, we will contact providers that we consider meet the following criteria:

- › demand from learners within targeted priority areas
- › history of good educational performance indicators
- › strong focus on improving educational outcomes for all learners.

For more detail, see [Guidance to develop your Investment Plan](#).

Guidance on responding to priority provision

[Plan Guidance \(PDF 11.3 MB\)](#), pp. 22–24, sets out the considerations that we give to investing in the network of provision, the need to reprioritise your funding when seeking any increases, and areas we consider investment priorities (see pp. 35–42 of Plan Guidance for specific areas of investment priorities).

Priority provision is provision that we expect TEOs to continue delivering where they already offer it. It is provision that we will support with additional funding (if available) where demand and performance are strong.

However, in some areas of priority provision we do not expect significant growth, or more providers delivering this provision. Providers are expected to demonstrate evidence and understanding of stakeholder needs and network considerations when looking to grow priority provision.

This particularly applies for providers seeking to introduce new programmes that qualify as priority provision. In these cases, providers would also need to demonstrate gaps in the network of provision that the new programme would be filling. They would also need to have a track record of successfully delivering similar programmes, alongside strong evidence of demand and stakeholder support.

Plan Guidance noted that total funding available is unlikely to fully match demand. If providers are seeking **additional** funding for, or want to move funding to, priority provision areas that are **new** to them, we still require providers to demonstrate a strong rationale for this investment in their specific case.

A move into a new priority provision area **may not be funded**. Please contact your Relationship Manager, or phone us on 0800 601 301 or email customerservice@tec.govt.nz, prior to making any changes.

For social work, Plan Guidance for 2027 stated that we will prioritise funding for delivery of the three-year Bachelor of Social Work, recently accredited by the Social Workers Registration Board, over the four-year degree. For clarity, we expect TEOs offering the four-year Bachelor of Social Work to move towards delivery of the three-year degree over time to better align with our wider investment priorities for health education. However, we acknowledge that TEOs will need time to make this change and we will continue to fund the four-year degree while these transitions take place.

We can only fund qualifications and micro-credentials that meet our funding conditions

We have included a range of priorities identified by industry in Plan Guidance. Qualifications and micro-credentials identified as priorities must meet our funding conditions to be eligible for funding. Education and training with a focus on health and safety may be a priority for industry but is unlikely to meet the restrictions set out in our funding conditions. Such provision can be offered on a user-pays basis.

Changes are under way for Initial Teacher Education

This section sets out the Ministry of Education's (Ministry's) forward-looking view of its preferred elements in Initial Teacher Education (ITE). It reflects change under way to ITE provision as well as the Ministry's role in implementing Government education priorities.

The Ministry is focused on improving the quality of ITE programmes. These programmes are important for maximising the capability and capacity of new teachers.

The changes under the Education and Training (System Reform) Amendment Bill will mean the Secretary for Education will take over responsibility from the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand for establishing and maintaining teacher education qualification standards.

This legislative change is likely to mean changes to ITE programme expectations. Supplementary Plan Guidance is not intended to confirm those expectations. However, it is likely that ITE programmes will eventually need to reflect the elements described below. These elements are more focused than, but consistent with, the content currently required for ITE programme approval by the Teaching Council's statement of [ITE Programme Approval, Monitoring and Review Requirements \(PDF 840 KB\)](#).

There are three focus areas the Ministry wants to see ITE programmes include from 2027.

1. A focus on practice-based elements to instil essential teacher skills

This involves:

- › programmes that use practice in the workplace (school) as a central base for student teacher learning
- › programmes delivering learning that strongly integrates theory with, and for, practice
- › the workplace being closely involved with the provider in programme design, candidate selection, and assessment
- › joint responsibility for candidate selection of both provider and workplace
- › providers substantively assisting with mentor teacher development to build the capacity and expertise to mentor and integrate programme delivery.

2. A focus on specific teacher knowledge to drive better student outcomes

This involves:

- › programmes prioritising structured literacy and numeracy approaches for primary teacher trainees across school and provider settings
- › secondary and primary programmes demonstrating deep understanding and commitment to teaching student teachers to use the science of learning and explicit instruction and the related evidence, strategies and concepts required
- › programmes imparting an up-to-date and in-depth understanding of curriculum content.

3. A focus on demonstrating the programme is producing competent, fit-for-teaching graduates

This involves:

- › comprehensive use of evidence-based strategies in the training of student teachers
- › student teacher assessment being centred on achieving school-based practice competency through both formative and summative assessment methods
- › programmes graduating new teachers who practise strategies and approaches for neurodivergent students and display sound behaviour and classroom management
- › providers having final accountability for enrolments, quality, qualification award and outcomes.

For all ITE providers, we will reach out to you individually to understand how many places you will be seeking from the Ministry of Education for the School Onsite Training Programme.

We also need to know the forecast enrolments in other ITE programmes supported by funding from the Ministry, such as Employment-based ITE programmes.

All required Plan components are due by 3 July

Activity	Timing
The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) publishes a notice in the <i>New Zealand Gazette</i> setting out requirements for Plan content, timetable, assessment and Plan summaries	16 March 2026
TEC releases Plan Guidance and Strategic Intent template; Plan engagement begins	16 March 2026
Government announces Budget 2026	28 May 2026
TEC notifies indicative allocations	From 2 June 2026
TEC releases Supplementary Plan Guidance to reflect any policy or Budget changes	Early June 2026
TEC releases Mix(es) of Provision and Educational Performance Indicator Commitments templates	From 8 June 2026
Providers submit proposed Plans	By 3 July 2026
TEC reviews proposed Plans (including further discussion with providers as needed)	July–October 2026
Providers are notified of decisions in writing	From November 2026
First payments made against Plans; Plan delivery begins	January 2027

New provider applications have closed

This year we ran a different timeline for new provider applications. This process has now closed. Thank you to those that applied.

For more information on the process please see [Plan Guidance \(PDF 11.3 MB\)](#), pp. 48–49, or [New applications for on-Plan funding](#).

Submit Plan components through DXP Ngā Kete

All required components of your Plan must be submitted by 3 July 2026 via [DXP Ngā Kete](#). This includes your Strategic Intent, Mix(es) of Provision (MoPs) and Educational Performance Indicator Commitments (EPICs), as required.

Incomplete or missing Plan components may delay your funding approval and can affect whether you are allocated funding. TEC reserves the right to base investment decisions on the information available by the relevant due dates and can propose to decline funding if you have not submitted correct or adequate information by the due date. Plan component requirements are described on pp. 43–52 of [Plan Guidance \(PDF 11.3 MB\)](#).

If you are unsure about what you need to submit, we encourage you to contact your Relationship Manager, or phone us on 0800 601 301, or email customerservice@tec.govt.nz.

Exploring how artificial intelligence can support investment assessment processes

Like many government agencies, TEC is exploring how artificial intelligence (AI) can create efficiencies and support better, more consistent services. Within the investment assessment process, AI is used to support information analysis. It does not make decisions.

Human advisors and expert panels remain fully responsible and accountable for all assessments and advice, and funding decisions will continue to be made by the TEC Board, or an appropriate decision maker.

Assurance processes, including peer review and appeal pathways, continue unchanged, and providers submit their plans as usual through DXP Ngā Kete.

2027 Significant Plan Amendments and Replacement Plans

You might want to make changes to your approved Plan during the 2027 funding year. We have criteria in place which allow you to make some changes without our approval. For other changes you will need to request a Significant Plan Amendment or a Replacement Plan. For more information see [Significant Plan Amendments and Replacement Plans](#).

Exceeding over-delivery limits may impact your future funding

Over-delivery refers to the value of any delivery over 100% of a TEO's allocation for Delivery at Levels 3 to 7 (non-degree) on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF) and all industry training (DQ3-7) and Delivery at Levels 7 (degree) to 10 on the NZQCF (DQ7-10) Funds.

Providers must not deliver provision above 105% of their approved funding allocation for DQ3-7 and DQ7-10

TEOs should not deliver over 105% of their approved allocation without our approval.

We monitor over-delivery, and going over this limit without approval is a performance issue and may affect your future funding or funding allocations. Exceeding your delivery limit can have an increased cost to the Crown through the Student Loan Scheme, and risk the quality and financial sustainability of provision.

If you think your delivery may exceed 105% of your approved funding, contact your Relationship Manager or us on 0800 601 301 or customerservice@tec.govt.nz as soon as possible to discuss it. Further information is available at [Consequences for delivery over 105% of DQ3-7 and DQ7-10 funding](#).

Eligible TEOs receive flexible funding up to 102% or 10 equivalent full-time students (EFTS) (whichever is larger). For some small private training establishments (PTEs), 10 additional EFTS of flexible funding may be greater than 105% of their allocation. Additional EFTS received through flexible funding are not considered unauthorised over-delivery.

We will use past delivery, including under- and over-delivery, in our assessment of your Plan.

For more information, please see:

- › [Consequences for delivery over 105% of DQ3-7 and DQ7-10 funding](#)
- › [Reporting and monitoring – DQ3-7](#)
- › [Reporting and monitoring – DQ7-10](#)

We have resources to help you develop your Investment Plan

You should use the following resources when developing your Investment Plan. These resources explain the requirements for Plans, our expectations, the Investment Plan process and how we make decisions.

Key resources to use when developing your Plan

- › The [Tertiary Education Strategy 2025–2030 \(PDF 1.3 MB\)](#) sets out the Government’s strategic vision for New Zealand’s tertiary system and its current and medium-term priorities. We have set out our expectations on pp. 17–19 of [Plan Guidance \(PDF 11.3 MB\)](#).
- › The [New Zealand Gazette notice](#) (Proposed Investment Plans for 2027–2029: Content and Submission; Assessment Criteria; and Plan Summaries) (Plan Gazette) is the legal instrument where we set requirements for the content of Investment Plans, Plan summaries, the submission process, the timetable, and the criteria against which proposed Plans are assessed.
- › [Plan Guidance \(PDF 11.3 MB\)](#) expands on the Plan Gazette notice, providing information on the wider strategic context for investment, and specific details about Plan requirements, our investment priorities and our assessment approach.
- › The [Strategic Intent template](#) provides a framework to help you meet the requirements set out in the Plan Gazette notice and Plan Guidance. **We strongly recommend that you use the template to structure your Plan.** This will enable you to tell your organisation’s story in the most effective way and supports us to better assess your Plan.
- › This document, **Supplementary Plan Guidance**, provides you with further details following Budget 2026, and extra information relevant to investment for 2027.

Additional resources that support you to develop your Plan

- › Our [2026 Funding Conditions Catalogue \(PDF 3.5 MB\)](#)
- › Our [Learner Success approach](#)
- › The [Māori Education Strategy: Ka Hikitia](#)
- › The [Māori Language in Education Strategy: Tau Mai Te Reo](#)
- › The [Action Plan for Pacific Education](#)
- › DXP Ngā Kete data and information, including:
 - › the Secondary-Tertiary Transitions app on DXP Ngā Kete
 - › the Post-Study Outcomes app on DXP Ngā Kete
- › Our [Transitions from Secondary School research](#)

Resources to help you understand how our investment processes work

- › [Introduction to the TEC's investment process](#): describes our investment process
- › [Our Investment Framework for Learner \(Delivery\) Funds](#): describes the way we make investment decisions
- › [Our Response Framework for Educational Delivery and Performance](#): describes how we manage performance where it needs to improve
- › Information on [Significant Plan Amendments and Replacement Plans](#)

Appendix A – On-Plan funds

We provide most of our funding through Investment Plans. The following funds are on-Plan (the funding is allocated through the investment process):

- › Adult and Community Education (Communities) Fund
- › Adult and Community Education (Schools) Fund
- › Adult and Community Education (TEIs) Fund
- › Delivery at Levels 1 and 2 on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF) Fund (DQ1-2)
- › Delivery at Levels 3 to 7 (non-degree) on the NZQCF and all industry training Fund (DQ3-7)
- › Delivery at Levels 7 (degree) to 10 on the NZQCF Fund (DQ7-10)
- › English Language Teaching – Intensive Literacy and Numeracy Fund (ELT)
- › English Language Teaching – Refugee English Fund (Refugee English)
- › Equity Fund
- › Intensive Literacy and Numeracy Fund (ILN)
- › Learner Component TEO-led Workplace Literacy and Numeracy Fund (TEO-led WLN)
- › Youth Guarantee Fund (YG).

Information about each of these funds can be found on [Fund Finder](#) and in the [Funding Conditions Catalogue](#).

Appendix B – Glossary

Course completion	The proportion of successful course completions each year, relative to total course enrolments.
Credit achievement	The credits achieved by learners at a tertiary education organisation (TEO) as a proportion of the total number of credits learners are expected to achieve in a given period at each TEO.
DXP Ngā Kete	DXP Ngā Kete is a secure online portal that allows tertiary education organisations (TEOs) and the TEC to share information. TEOs use DXP Ngā Kete to upload/submit data to TEC’s Data Exchange Platform (DXP).
EFTS	Equivalent full-time student. One EFTS unit is defined as the learner workload that would normally be carried out in a single academic year (12-month period) by a learner enrolled full-time and generally equates to 120 credits on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF).
EPIC	Educational Performance Indicator Commitment.
First-year retention	The proportion of learners that enrol in their second year of study for their intended qualification after their first year of study, relative to the rest of their cohort.
Foundation education	Programmes at Levels 1 and 2 on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF), and Level 3 when delivered through the Youth Guarantee Fund. Foundation education also includes learning below Level 1.
Indicative allocation	Our yearly estimate of each provider’s “on-Plan” funding that they could receive in a year if their Investment Plan is approved.
ISB	Industry Skills Board . There are eight ISBs.
Ka Hikitia	The Māori Education Strategy: Ka Hikitia .
Kia Ōrite Toolkit	A toolkit that provides current, New Zealand-specific guidance to help TEOs better support disabled learners: Kia Ōrite Toolkit .
Micro-credential	Study or training that leads to an award on the NZQCF but does not, in and of itself, lead to an award of a qualification: Micro-credentials – NZQA .
MoP	Mix of Provision.
New provider	A provider that has not received TEC on-Plan funding in the last 12 months.
On-Plan funding	Funding assessed and allocated through submitting an Investment Plan (under section 425 of the Education and Training Act).
Plan Guidance	Guidance we publish on the content and criteria used to assess proposed Investment Plans.
Programme completion	The proportion of learners in a starting cohort that go on to complete a programme at the same NZQCF level at the same industry training provider. The period for measuring programme completion is three years for work-based learning at NZQCF

	Levels 1 to 3, four years for work-based learning at NZQCF Level 4 and above, and six years for apprenticeship programmes.
PTE	Private training establishment.
Qualification completion	The proportion of learners in a starting cohort that go on to complete a qualification at the same level at the same TEO. The period for measuring qualification completion is two years for qualifications at Levels 1–3, four years for qualifications at Levels 4–7 (non-degree), and six years for qualifications at Level 7 (degree) to 10.
Supplementary Plan Guidance (SPG)	This document. It supplements the information contained in Plan Guidance. It provides any updates and is usually released in June.
Tau Mai Te Reo	The Māori Language in Education Strategy: Tau Mai Te Reo .
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission.
TEI	Tertiary education institution. TEIs include universities, polytechnics and wānanga.
TEO	Tertiary education organisation.
TES	Tertiary Education Strategy. Sets out the Government's long-term strategic direction for tertiary education: Tertiary Education Strategy 2025–2030 (PDF 1.3 MB) .