



**Tertiary Education
Commission**
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua

Statement of Intent

Tauākī Whakamaunga Atu

2026/27 – 2029/30



Our vision

Tō mātou wawata

A resilient and productive
New Zealand, powered by
a skilled, confident and
adaptable workforce

Our purpose

Tō mātou pūtake

To enable a tertiary
education and careers
system that delivers
lifelong learning and equips
students, trainees, and
employers for success

Contents

Foreword from the Board Chair and Acting Chief Executive	4
Statement of responsibility	5
Our operating context	6
Our goals and strategic priorities	10

Ngā Ihirangi

He Kupu Whakataki nā te Toihau Poari me te Tumu Whakarae Whakakapi	4
Tauākī whakamaunga atu	5
Tō mātou horopaki mahi whakahaere	6
Ā mātou whāinga, whakaarotau rautaki hoki	10

Foreword from the Board Chair and Acting Chief Executive

He Kupu Whakataki nā te Toihau Poari me te Tumu Whakarae Whakakapi

We are pleased to present the Tertiary Education Commission's (TEC's) Statement of Intent for the period of 2026/27–2029/30.

The TEC's Statement of Intent sets out how we will give effect to the Government's priorities, as set out in Tertiary Education Strategy 2025-2030, over the next four years.

The tertiary education and careers system plays a critical role in New Zealand's economic growth and social wellbeing. High-quality tertiary education, combined with accessible and trusted careers information, helps people make informed decisions about learning and work throughout their lives.

Over the period of this Statement of Intent, our focus will be on continuing to strengthen a tertiary education and careers system that is connected, accessible, and responsive to New Zealand's current and future labour-market and workforce needs.

Improving learner outcomes remains a priority, with a strong focus on improving outcomes for students and trainees who are under-served. We are focussed on lifting participation, progression, and achievement so that all students and trainees can succeed.

We continually look for ways to improve our functions, and a particular focus in the period ahead will be looking at ways we can balance accountability and reduce the level of compliance activities for providers.

The TEC is committed to working closely with our stakeholders. Collaboration across the system is essential to ensure education and training align with regional and national priorities, support economic productivity, and deliver lasting benefits for New Zealanders.

We are confident that the direction set out in this Statement of Intent positions the TEC to support a resilient and productive New Zealand, now and into the future.




Dr Alan Bollard
Board Chair
Tertiary Education Commission




Gillian Dudgeon
Acting Chief Executive
Tertiary Education Commission

Statement of responsibility

Tauākī whakamaunga atu

This Statement of Intent 2026/27 – 2029/30 is produced in accordance with sections 138 to 149A of the Crown Entities Act 2004. It describes the strategic intentions and objectives of the Tertiary Education Commission Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua. As required under section 141 of the Crown Entities Act, the Statement of Intent also outlines how the Tertiary Education Commission will manage its operations, functions and organisational capability to meet those objectives.

We certify that the information contained in this Statement of Intent 2026/27 – 2029/30 is a fair and reasonable reflection of the Tertiary Education Commission's strategic and operating intentions.

Signed on behalf of the Board of the Tertiary Education Commission:



Dr Alan Bollard
Board Chair

Tertiary Education Commission

10 June 2026



Simon Flood
Chair

Whatitata Whakau –
Risk and Assurance Committee
Tertiary Education Commission

10 June 2026

Our operating context

Tō mātou horopaki mahi whakahaere

The tertiary education and careers system is vital for New Zealand's economic growth

The tertiary education and careers system is a significant contributor to a strong society and thriving economy. It drives better economic, social and cultural outcomes for industry, people and communities, creates new knowledge and improves economic growth.

High-quality, accessible careers information supports New Zealanders to successfully prepare for the future by making good career decisions. The skills and knowledge people gain through tertiary education improves their chances of employment and increases earning potential.

The TEC is the Government's key agency for investment in tertiary education and careers services

The TEC is a Crown agency established under the Crown Entities Act 2004, and we are governed by a Board of Commissioners appointed by the Minister for Tertiary Education. As a Crown entity, we give effect to government policy.

The TEC is focused on achieving the Government's priorities and delivering our core functions effectively and efficiently.

We lead the Government's relationship with the tertiary education sector in New Zealand and have statutory responsibility for funding and monitoring all TEC-funded tertiary education organisations.

We are New Zealand's lead careers agency and provide occupational and educational information to build links between schools, tertiary providers, employers and communities, to ensure students and trainees are ready for work and further study.

We are focused on delivering the Government's priorities for New Zealand

The TEC ensures that its governance, operating model, priority setting, and planning are consistently aligned with Government priorities and our statutory role as a Crown Agent.

We are focused on providing strong governance and leadership to support the implementation of Government priorities, deliver improved value for money, and achieve stronger system and learner outcomes.

We prioritise value for money through a performance framework that clearly links investment decisions to outcomes. We focus on the impact of funding and interventions at provider, sector and system level.

Our role to implement the Government's work programme ensures we support a system that is effective, efficient and responsive.

Our statutory functions are set out in the Education and Training Act 2020

We are required to:



Section 4 of the Education and Training Act 2020 states that the Act's purpose is to establish and regulate an education system that honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi and supports Māori–Crown relations. The Act sets a clearer and higher standard for giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi than previous social policy legislation. It emphasises the role of education agencies and the education sector as a whole in giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Through our stewardship and monitoring role for the tertiary education and careers system, we work to ensure that all tertiary education organisations are giving effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a condition of their funding and delegated roles and powers from the Crown.

The Tertiary Education Strategy

The TEC is required by the Education and Training Act 2020 to give effect to the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES). The TES sets out the long-term strategic direction for tertiary education, including economic and social goals, and the development aspirations of Māori and other population groups.

The TES is built on key objectives for education, which outline the things the Government will focus on to improve outcomes and wellbeing across the education system.

The TES 2025-2030 sets five priorities shaping the future of tertiary education in New Zealand:

1. Achievement

Ensure students and trainees gain skills that lead to good careers and economic security, with a focus on strong pathways between school, tertiary education, and work.

2. Economic Impact and Innovation

Increase the economic impact of tertiary education by delivering relevant, adaptable skills, and research that drives productivity, innovation, commercialisation and broader economic opportunities.

3. Access and Participation

Enable access to education and training for people from all backgrounds and regions, ensuring more people build relevant skills that contribute to a productive economy.

4. Integration and Collaboration

Deepen collaboration between education providers, employers, iwi, research institutions, and communities to align education with regional and national economic development.

5. International Education

Boost numbers of international students, supporting the sector to grow and increasing New Zealand's international connectivity, as set out in the International Education Growth Plan.

The TEC plays a central role in putting these priorities into practice across the tertiary education and careers system.

The TES includes actions that both tertiary education organisations (TEOs) and Government can take to help achieve the objectives. TEOs will need to show how they will have regard to the TES objectives in their Investment Plans. The TEC's Investment Plan Guidance supports TEOs to do this.

Our TEC strategic intentions framework has been updated to reflect the new TES, respond to its objectives, and support government priorities. The framework outlines our direction for a future-focused tertiary education and careers system that responds to the needs of students, trainees, communities and employers.

TEC Strategic Intentions Framework

Tertiary Education Strategy Priorities



Achievement



**Economic Impact
and Innovation**



**Access and
Participation**



**Integration and
Collaboration**



**International
Education**

TEC Vision and Purpose

Our Vision

A resilient and productive New Zealand,
powered by a skilled, confident and
adaptable workforce

Our Purpose

To enable a tertiary education and careers
system that delivers lifelong learning
and equips students, trainees, and
employers for success

TEC Strategic Goals



Goal 1:

A connected and accessible system



Goal 2:

A system that builds knowledge and
skills to advance innovation and productivity,
and enables people to succeed



Goal 3:

A system that drives achievement
and outcomes for individuals,
industry and regions



Goal 4:

An effective and efficient TEC

TEC Strategic Priorities

- › Ensure TEC's work programme is focused on delivering the Tertiary Education Strategy
- › Continue to deliver our investment and monitoring function to a high standard and make key continuous improvements for providers, students and trainees
- › Develop fit-for-purpose resources and tools to improve outcomes for individuals, industry and regions
- › Maintain and enhance our careers information service, and continue to strengthen connections between schools, employers and tertiary education organisations
- › Continue to enhance our functions, ensuring we remain effective and efficient

Our goals and strategic priorities

Ā mātou whāinga, whakaarotau rautaki hoki



Goal 1: A connected and accessible system

The TEC’s strategic goal “A connected and accessible system” delivers on the following TES priorities

Achievement	Economic Impact and Innovation	Access and Participation	Integration and Collaboration
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A tertiary education and careers system that provides clear pathways and access for all

The TES emphasises collaboration across the sector to reduce fragmentation and strengthen system connectivity. The TEC gives effect to this by coordinating planning and engagement across providers, employers, iwi, research institutions and regional partners, to align learning pathways with current and emerging workforce needs, to benefit New Zealand.

The TES specifically focuses on a system that is connected and accessible. The TEC will deliver on this through our work outlined below.

We are continually improving our investment and monitoring function to deliver the right skills for New Zealand

We use our investment levers to improve investment outcomes. Our investment in tertiary education drives economic growth, participation and achievement. Our investment helps tertiary education organisations respond to stakeholder needs and priorities, providing New Zealand with the skills, pathways and qualifications needed to maintain an appropriate network of provision, improve career outcomes for students and trainees, and drive economic growth.

We ensure available funding is directed towards the Government’s priorities, while ensuring the flexibility to accommodate new, innovative delivery focused on driving value to New Zealand.

With finite funding available, and enrolment numbers increasing, the TEC takes a considered and outcomes-focused approach to allocating tertiary funding to maximise the value of public investment.

We assess providers against a framework to establish a demonstrated commitment to, and evidence of, improved learner achievement, contribution to the network of tertiary provision in the context of the Government’s priorities, organisational capability, performance and future expectations, and financial performance and sustainability.

Our investment decisions prioritise high-quality provision in priority subjects that have good outcomes for students and trainees and support productivity and economic growth across many sectors in New Zealand. Where delivery is low quality, low priority, or delivers poor outcomes, we will consider disinvestment to be able to reallocate funding to higher-quality, higher-priority provision.

We work closely with the sector, industry (including through Industry Skills Boards), communities and other government agencies to identify workforce trends and future skills needs to inform our decision making. We work to strengthen provision that meets the needs and aspirations of Māori, including kaupapa Māori provision and provision in te reo Māori, where relevant.

Our strategic focus for investment in 2026/27 and outyears will be shaped by a tight fiscal environment, with more demand than can be fully funded. This will continue to require careful prioritisation and trade-offs to ensure investment will maximise the value of public investment for students and trainees, communities and the economy.

Our strategic priority for the medium term is to continue to implement changes to the tertiary education system to deliver on Government priorities and ensure a connected, accessible and integrated tertiary education and careers system. A key focus will also be to ensure we look to balance accountability and reduce compliance of reporting where possible.

Vocational Educational and Training changes will drive productivity for New Zealand

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is a vital part of our education and training environment. A well performing, responsive VET sector provides students and trainees with practical pathways into meaningful employment and ensures industry has access to the skills it needs to grow.

The VET system will now comprise polytechnics across all regions, with Open Polytechnic supporting online blended delivery learning, and private training establishments and wānanga delivering programmes which support communities, industries and employers in the way that works for them.

The TEC has implemented changes to the VET system to establish a system that is locally led, financially sustainable, and focused on delivering the skills New Zealand’s regions need. The changes also ensure training is aligned to better reflect the needs of local employers, support key industries, and ensure vocational education delivery aligns with workforce demand.

The VET system is one of the most important ways to support local jobs and give New Zealanders practical pathways, supporting students and trainees from school or in work. Lifting a person’s qualification level has been shown to deliver higher lifelong earnings.

The new VET system provides clear vocational pathways for people, including through strong secondary-tertiary connections and provision in high-growth sectors such as the primary industries and energy sector.

Our strategic priority for 2026/27 and beyond is to continue to work with and support the new polytechnics to build an effective VET system that works for students, employers and communities across New Zealand.

Industry Skills Boards will reflect the needs of local communities and industries

Industry Skills Boards (ISBs) will set standards based on industry needs and priorities. ISBs give industry a strong voice in shaping vocational education. The eight ISBs, established on 1 January 2026, will set and maintain qualifications, credentials and standards, endorse programmes, advise on workforce development priorities, and strengthen collaboration between education and industry.

We are focused on streamlining regulatory and reporting requirements

We will actively pursue meaningful reductions in the duplication of reporting and other compliance requirements across the tertiary education sector to improve clarity and consistency of investment expectations. We will continue to work collaboratively with providers to simplify investment, monitoring, and accountability processes, ensuring they are proportionate, risk-based, and focused on outcomes. By reducing duplication and administrative load, we will enable providers to focus resources on delivering high-quality education, support students and trainees, and respond to workforce and regional needs, while ensuring we maintain accountability for public funding, and stewardship of the tertiary and careers system.

We use data insights to identify where access barriers remain

We are a data-driven organisation and use data insights to understand changes to access and participation, such as learner achievement and outcomes analytics and participation trends, to identify where access barriers remain. This enables investment to be directed accordingly and contribute to a system where more students and trainees – particularly under-served groups – can enter, remain in, and succeed in tertiary education and beyond.

The TEC has strengthened data-sharing across the tertiary network through our Data System Refresh programme. This has enabled a more connected tertiary system, helping pathways between school, tertiary providers, and employment to be joined up and more efficient.



We monitor tertiary education organisations to ensure stewardship of the system

The TEC is responsible on behalf of the Crown for monitoring the operation and long-term viability of New Zealand’s tertiary education institutions (TEIs) – universities, polytechnics and two of the wānanga. These TEIs are Crown entities and form the core of New Zealand’s public tertiary education system. This means a risk to their operation or viability presents a fiscal risk to the Crown, as well as a risk to New Zealand’s public network of tertiary education and ultimately to students. Crown-funded assets also need to be carefully managed and appropriately maintained, acquired or disposed of. The TEC is responsible for advising the Government of capital asset management by TEIs.

The TEC undertakes comprehensive monitoring of the financial performance and sustainability of these institutions, as well as their compliance with the conditions that come with seeking and accepting Crown funding. We have a comprehensive audit function, auditing at least 45 tertiary education organisations (TEOs) every year to ensure they comply with funding conditions, performance targets and regulatory requirements.

Our monitoring ensures accountability for public funding and contributes to the TEC’s stewardship of the overall tertiary system. It helps lift capability and ensures TEOs prioritise learner achievement, so that our investment supports better outcomes for students and trainees, and New Zealand.

Our monitoring functions allow us to respond to risks at both the TEO and system level and provide guidance to the sector to help strengthen performance, while ensuring we minimise compliance requirements on providers.

At any given time, parts of the tertiary sector can face financial and operational challenges, and the TEC’s monitoring work is crucial in not only understanding the overall system risk but also informing the Government’s consideration of system changes.

We provide career information and tools to help students and trainees connect with and transition to the world of work

The TEC is connecting students and trainees with the world of work by encouraging schools to incorporate both Tahatū Career Navigator and Inspiring the Future into their subject lesson planning to offer students an integrated journey from curiosity to career.

Inspiring the Future brings real-world voices into the classroom, helping teachers spark meaningful discussions about work, values and possibilities. Tahatū Career Navigator provides practical tools to guide students from those conversations into planning their next steps by connecting their interests to school subjects, qualifications and training pathways to a career idea.

Both platforms align with the New Zealand curriculum’s future-focused learning and career education. Teachers get access to ready-made resources, activities and tools, saving time while delivering high-quality career education.

Further information on Tahatū Career Navigator and Inspiring the Future is detailed below in Goal 2: A system that builds knowledge and skills to advance innovation and productivity, and enable people to succeed.

How we will measure success

Our strategic priorities and core business activities are key contributors to our goal of **A connected and accessible system**. The following performance information will illustrate progress towards achieving this goal.

Goal 1 – A connected and accessible system			
Outcome measures	Metric	Metric level	Desired trend
An accessible system that enables students and trainees participation and progression to build relevant skills	The percentage of enrolled learners eligible for funding, in targeted priority areas published in plan guidance for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › higher education › vocational education and training 	System metric	▲
A system that provides information on career pathways and employment outcomes	Feedback from New Zealanders on the usefulness of the TEC's career planning website Tahatū Career Navigator	TEC metric	▲
A connected system that supports collaboration	Collaboration between tertiary education organisations, and with employers, iwi and communities increases system connectivity	System metric	▲

Metric levels

TEC metric: We are responsible for the results of these metrics as they reflect our role in implementing policy.

System metric: We contribute to these metrics which focus on policy outcomes, through investment in tertiary education and training. The results of these measures are impacted by external factors including the state of the economy and labour market.

More detail on how we assess our performance is also provided in our Statement of Performance Expectations. This is updated annually, with the most recent version available at www.tec.govt.nz.

Goal 2: A system that builds knowledge and skills to advance innovation and productivity, and enables people to succeed



The TEC's strategic goal "A system that builds knowledge and skills to advance innovation and productivity, and enables people to succeed" delivers on the following TES priorities:

Economic Impact and Innovation (main)	Achievement	Access and Participation	International Education
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A tertiary education and careers system that is responsive and forward-looking to enable people, employers and communities to thrive

The fundamentals of New Zealand's tertiary education system are strong. New Zealanders can access high-quality tertiary education and training around the country and online.

New Zealand's tertiary sector is a key driver of economic growth. Our universities are all ranked in the top three percent in the world, and are characterised by high-calibre teachers, academics and researchers. Our VET sector plays a critical role in supporting regional labour markets and providing New Zealanders with practical pathways needed for productive, meaningful work. Employment outcomes for students and trainees are good, and New Zealand is an attractive destination for international students – which strengthens our connections with the global community.

The careers system is a key way that people understand and realise educational and economic opportunities. Ensuring it is connected and accessible is a strong driver of broader economic outcomes.

Over the 2026/27 year and beyond, we will continue to focus on equipping New Zealanders with the skills and capabilities to make them career confident and resilient. For our students, trainees and providers, this means providing information, tools and support to inform and enable good educational and employment decisions.

We will give effect to this goal through our work outlined below.

Our investment decisions give effect to the TES and the Government’s long-term strategic direction

The TEC’s investment decisions are driven by the TES, which sets out the Government’s long-term strategic direction for tertiary education in New Zealand. The TES highlights transformative trends that Government and tertiary providers need to respond to in order to support economic growth and broader national goals.

Increasing the economic impact of tertiary education is about delivering relevant, adaptable skills as well as research that generates tangible impacts through innovation, commercialisation and entrepreneurship.

Within the framework of the TES, the Government wants to see the tertiary education sector focused on:

- › improving learner achievement and accessibility, including ease of credit recognition and transfer across providers
- › building collaboration with stakeholders, with universities working closely together and with public research organisations
- › embracing artificial intelligence in programme development, research and teaching
- › research that generates economic outcomes through innovation, commercialisation and entrepreneurship, and
- › growing its international reputation and attracting international students.

As a key driver to investment decisions, the TEC requires all providers to show how they will give effect to the TES and give confidence that they will contribute to achieving these objectives and priorities over time.

The tertiary education and careers system supports everyone to gain the skills, knowledge and pathways to succeed, so people, employers and communities can thrive

The TEC wants New Zealanders to have the skills and experience they need to find sustainable work so that people, employers and communities can excel and thrive.

The TEC has a legislative role to provide occupational and educational information, and to build links between schools, tertiary providers, and employers to ensure students and trainees are ready for employment and further study.

We do this through providing a suite of information and tools to support career decisions, ensuring links with our investment function, and partnering with agencies and communities to improve career outcomes and contribute to economic growth.

We are the connector between providers, students and trainees, communities, and employers

The TEC continues to strengthen its focus on supporting economic growth by engaging with economic development agencies, employers, and community stakeholders. This enables us to gain regional insights to inform our investment decisions and priorities, address critical skill shortages, as well as guide the design and delivery of our products and services. This also allows us to look across the wider sector and continually improve our connections with our partners and providers to share insights, lessons and opportunities.

Innovation and economic growth rely on strong collaboration across the education-to-employment pipeline. The TEC advances this by working with providers to partner with employers, iwi, and regional stakeholders to ensure tertiary education is aligned with workforce and economic development priorities.

New Zealand has a growing Māori economy, which is a critical driver of national economic growth. We seek to understand iwi aspirations for education-to-employment, careers, and wider social goals, and how we can support them in achieving their aspirations. Where this sits outside our remit, we act as a connector between iwi, providers and other Crown agencies.

We fund research that benefits New Zealand

Research is a critical component of a high-quality tertiary education system and plays an essential role in New Zealand's economic, social and cultural wellbeing. Through our investment, we support research that builds knowledge capability, strengthens innovation, and contributes to the long-term prosperity of New Zealand.

The TEC's investment in research focuses on supporting high-quality, relevant and impactful research activity that aligns with Government priorities and responds to the needs of New Zealand's communities, industries and regions. We prioritise research that demonstrates excellence, delivers public value, and contributes to a resilient and future-focused tertiary education system.

The new Tertiary Research Excellence Fund will be implemented from 2028

The Tertiary Research Excellence Fund (TREF) will replace the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF). It complements other changes including the goals of the new TES and the establishment of the University Strategy Group, public research organisations and the Prime Minister's Science, Innovation and Technology Advisory Council. Work is currently under way to design the TREF, and changes arising from this will be implemented for investment in 2028.

National Careers System Strategy and Action Plan

The National Careers System Strategy (NCSS) is a contributor to the Government’s Going for Growth economic agenda and the TES. To support the implementation of the NCSS we have a cross-agency Action Plan. The Action Plan sets out how the TEC will continue to lead and strengthen the careers system to support student and trainee success, employability, innovation and effective transitions through tertiary education and into work.

The Action Plan has been revised to support greater alignment with the Government’s Going for Growth – Developing Talent priorities and the TES. It focuses on improving access to high-quality careers information, building system capability, and using evidence to improve outcomes, particularly for students and trainees who experience persistent disadvantage.

The NCSS was developed through a collaborative approach, working closely with key agencies and industry bodies, as well as community representatives, to create a strategy for all people in New Zealand. We are continuing to work with these groups to deliver our Action Plan.

Tahatū Career Navigator is our next-generation careers planning tool

Tahatū Career Navigator is an initiative of the NCSS Action Plan and is the next generation of the previous careers.govt.nz website, refreshing the best of its content, tools and functions. It is available for all New Zealanders following its successful rollout to all secondary schools in June 2025.

Tahatū Career Navigator connects school subjects, qualifications and jobs, helping people plan their way to a career. For the first time it brings information together in one place, profiling school subjects, qualifications and career ideas. Tahatū Career Navigator helps users set goals, explore options and take practical steps, such as choosing courses, preparing CVs or planning next moves. It supports continued learning and skill development across a lifetime rather than stopping after school.

Our strategic priority for 2026/27 and beyond is to continue to focus on growing the use of Tahatū Career Navigator by New Zealanders at any life stage to support positive career outcomes. Priority audiences include schools, tertiary education providers and those returning to work, upskilling or changing careers.



Inspiring the Future

Inspiring the Future (ITF) is a key programme of the NCSS to connect school age children with volunteer role models from the world of work in a fun and inspiring event. Research shows that when students meet workers and hear about their jobs and the pathways they took to get there, it helps to break down limiting beliefs and inspires them to consider new possibilities for their futures.

The programme is accessed via an online platform, www.inspiringthefuture.org.nz, where volunteers register to be role models and schools can login to host an Inspiring the Future event. Schools can select role models in their communities for a physical event or from anywhere in New Zealand for an online event.

Inspiring the Future brings real-world voices into the classroom, helping teachers spark meaningful discussions about work, values and possibilities.

The programme continues to be a connector between schools and industry, and the TEC plans to foster this relationship to target industry groups in 2026/27 and beyond.

International education plays an important role in the sector

A key part of our Investment Plan criteria is the requirement for TEOs to show how they will give effect to all priorities within the TES, including growing international reputation to attract international students.

International students bring over \$3 billion to New Zealand's economy. The TES has a key success measure to double the value of international education by 2034, as set out in the Government's Going for Growth agenda. This will be achieved through raising awareness, growing enrolments and increasing New Zealand's international rating as an attractive option for tertiary study.

We will continue to work alongside Education New Zealand which is the government agency dedicated to helping New Zealand realise the social, cultural and economic benefits of international education.

How we will assess progress

Our strategic priority and core business activities are key contributors to the outcome **A system that builds knowledge and skills to advance innovation and productivity and enables people to succeed.** The following performance information has been used to illustrate progress towards the outcome to which our work is a contributing factor.

Goal 2 – A system that builds knowledge and skills to advance innovation and productivity, and enables people to succeed			
Outcome measure	Metric	Metric level	Desired trend
A system that provides employers and communities with the skills they need	TEC investment decisions have regard to industry needs	TEC metric	▲

Metric levels

TEC metric: We are responsible for the results of these metrics as they reflect our role in implementing policy.

System metric: We contribute to these metrics which focus on policy outcomes, through investment in tertiary education and training. The results of these measures are impacted by external factors including the state of the economy and labour market.

More detail on how we assess our performance is also provided in our Statement of Performance Expectations. This is updated annually, with the most recent version available at <https://www.tec.govt.nz>.

Goal 3: A system that drives achievement and outcomes for individuals, industry and regions



A tertiary education and careers system that supports achievement and positive economic and social outcomes

The TEC's strategic goal "A system that drives achievement and outcomes for individuals, industry and regions" delivers on the following TES priorities:

Achievement	Access and participation	Integration and collaboration
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Improving student and trainee achievement is critical to meeting New Zealand's future skills needs

While New Zealand's tertiary education system performs strongly in some areas, it does not consistently deliver for all students and trainees. Longstanding disparities persist for Māori, Pacific peoples, students and trainees from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and disabled students and trainees. These inequities remain a significant system challenge.

Improving outcomes for these groups is essential to fully unlock New Zealand's potential and ensure all people can contribute to and benefit from the country's success. The TEC is committed to supporting the sector to achieve significantly improved educational outcomes, including in fields of study and industries/occupations that have large disparities in achievement, but have strong income and employment outcomes.

Intervention needs to focus on an ongoing lift in achievement, which will result in positive economic and social outcomes, including increased human capital, unconstrained social mobility, and decreased long-term social dependency. Achieving significantly better outcomes for all students and trainees is an economic and social priority.

Improved learner retention and completion rates deliver direct financial benefits to tertiary education providers. Research indicates that approximately 20 percent of first-time university students do not progress into their second year of study. Targeted investment in learner achievement initiatives offers compelling returns in sustaining demand through increased retention, progression, and course and qualification completion.

International evidence demonstrates that tertiary education systems achieving substantial improvements in learner achievement have adopted a comprehensive approach. This approach requires intentional, sustained, and whole-of-organisation commitment to placing students and trainees at the centre of institutional strategy, systems and decision-making.

Through our investment, monitoring and system-stewardship functions, we support tertiary providers to design and implement operating models that improve progression and completion outcomes. These approaches are expected to assist with a greater number of qualified, work-ready graduates to the labour market. We are committed to supporting the sector to achieve significantly improved educational outcomes, including empowering Māori to achieve their aspirations by responding to the needs of the growing Māori economy.

To realise this goal, organisations must become more learner-centric with a whole-of-organisation commitment to lifting achievement and retention across all groups. They should be able to demonstrate evidence-based approaches to learner success that are appropriate to learner cohorts and educational settings.

A further core role of the TEC is the provision of high-quality careers information and leadership across the careers system. This function complements the TEC's investment role in tertiary education and supports lifelong learning and informed decision-making. As the system leader for careers, the TEC is working with industry groups, private sector partners, and government agencies to take an integrated, whole-of-system approach to strengthening careers information, advice and guidance across New Zealand.

We provide information and tools to assist people with career choices. Our careers work focuses on opening people's eyes to what is possible, helping them to work out what interests them and how that connects to a career path.

Our strategic priorities for 2026/27 and beyond

Our strategic priorities in the medium term will be focusing on the development of fit-for-purpose resources and tools for work-based learning and smaller tertiary education organisations.



How we will assess progress

Our strategic priorities and core business activities are key contributors to our goal of **A system that drives achievement and outcomes for individuals, industry and regions**. The following performance information will illustrate progress towards achieving this goal.

Goal 3 – A system that drives achievement and outcomes for individuals, industry and regions			
Outcome measure	Metric	Metric level	Desired trend
The system supports students and trainees to achieve their tertiary education and employment goals	Completions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Provider-based – Qualifications and course completions › Work-based – Programme completions and credit achievement rates 	System metric	▲
	Percentage of students who are in employment within one to three years of graduation.	System metric	▲
	Tertiary education institutions' actions improve outcomes for learners	TEC metric	▲

Metric levels

TEC metric: We are responsible for the results of these metrics as they reflect our role in implementing policy.

System metric: We contribute to these metrics which focus on policy outcomes, through investment in tertiary education and training. The results of these measures are impacted by external factors including the state of the economy and labour market.

More detail on how we assess our performance is also provided in our Statement of Performance Expectations. This is updated annually, with the most recent version available at <https://www.tec.govt.nz>.



Goal 4: An effective and efficient TEC – our internal goal

We continue to enhance our functions, ensuring we remain effective and efficient

Our organisational health and capability are key to achieving our internal goal. We will ensure we continually improve our systems and processes to underpin our other three strategic goals, and as such, support the delivery of the TES objectives.

As an organisation, we continually strive to increase our efficiency and effectiveness both internally and externally to provide value for money for New Zealand. This means:

- › strengthening partnerships and coordinating effort with education partner agencies and the sector
- › continually developing our skills, capability, capacity and prioritisation processes.

Our strategic priority for 2026/27 and beyond

The TEC has a significant role in the tertiary education system, providing funding, information and guidance to tertiary education organisations and careers support to students and trainees. The TEC will continue to manage all of these functions in a way that considers progressing Government priorities and delivering on core functions to a high standard.

We have strong financial management

We operate in a manner consistent with section 51 of the Crown Entities Act 2004.

To ensure a financially sustainable future and the ability to deliver on our strategic intentions, we have a five-year Strategic Financial Plan and a Long-Term Intentions Plan.

These Plans outline our approach to managing both our operating costs and capital expenditure. They set our internal budget parameters and form the basis for our Statement of Performance Expectations. Through our regular reviews we monitor and manage our core costs to ensure the TEC remains sustainable and our investment in tertiary education organisations delivers on the Government's priorities.

We have an adaptable, capable workforce

Workforce changes are planned and managed through regular reviews of organisational capability and capacity, informed by strategic priorities, demand forecasts and fiscal settings. This enables the TEC to adapt its workforce over time through recruitment, redeployment of resources, capability development and, where necessary, organisational change, while continuing to meet its obligations as a good employer.

We are committed to being a good employer

Our employment practices meet the Crown Entities Act 2004 obligations to be a good employer. We are committed to providing a workplace where all employees feel valued, supported and empowered. This commitment is reinforced through various capability-building initiatives including Situational Leadership workshops, and updates to our Code of Conduct to align with the Public Sector Code of Conduct. All of this strengthens expectations around respectful behaviour, integrity, and merit-based appointments across the organisation.

We are progressing with the delivery of our information system and data strategies

Central to our information system and data strategies is increased use of technology and data to improve our business operations. This is being balanced against the need to live within our means and find ways (for example, through combining technology systems) to reduce the overall cost of technology to the TEC.

Sector-provided data underpins our operations, particularly our investment and monitoring activities. We have completed the replacement of our data-collection systems, delivering a sustainable, long-term solution for both the TEC and the sector. The new system provides a simpler, more cost-effective way for organisations to submit data to the TEC.

We continue to work with and support the education sector, with a focus on securing cost-effective, sector-wide pricing arrangements. This currently includes leading negotiations for the 2027 renewal of the sector-wide Microsoft licence agreement.

We apply artificial intelligence where it positively supports our work, managing risks carefully and ensuring people remain accountable for decisions.

We are working towards closing the gender pay gap

We aim to reduce the gender pay gap to under 10 percent by the end of 2026. We use the Public Service Commission formula to analyse our gender pay gap. This formula is the difference between the average salary for men and the average salary for women as a percentage of the average salary for men. Our gender pay gap is 10.4 percent. We will continue to maintain our systems and processes, such as our strengthened starting-salary and appointment practices, refreshed people policies and procedures to embed best practice, and continued enhancements to our career development and progression framework.

We are inclusive and diverse

Inclusion and diversity is particularly important to us to ensure we are able to effectively deliver for all of our students, trainees and partners. Internally, we also foster and celebrate the diversity that exists in the TEC's workforce through our Gender and Ethnic Pay gap action plans which will be incorporated into a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion plan. This is complemented by staff-led networks, including Te Pā Harakeke (Māori staff network), and Rainbow, Christian and Neurodiversity networks, which create connection, amplify diverse perspectives, and support a sense of belonging across the organisation

Managing risk is a key part of our organisational governance

As we continue to respond to changes in our operating environment, risk management remains an integral component of our organisational governance at both a strategic and operational level. Our approach to risk management focuses on the following elements:

- › providing accurate and timely management information on the key areas of risk exposure and the actions required to mitigate strategic, operational and project risk.
- › ensuring a consistent and proportionate approach to the identification, assessment and control of risk
- › supporting the pursuit of opportunities through an appropriate balance of risk taking and risk management
- › fostering and encouraging a risk-aware culture where risk management is seen as a key enabler to organisational success.

Our risk management framework aligns with the International Standards Organisation (ISO) standard in Risk Management (ISO 31000).

We review, report and monitor operational risks on a six-monthly basis; the Executive Leadership Team also conducts a formal assessment of our key strategic risks twice annually. Our strategic and operational risk profiles are included in regular reporting to Whatitata Whakau – our Risk and Assurance Committee.

Through careful management, we already meet 2030 requirements for carbon reduction

The Carbon Neutral Government Programme aims to accelerate emissions reduction in the public sector.

The TEC has reduced travel and our office footprint, along with introducing a flexible working policy to enable staff to work from home, further reducing our carbon emissions. This helped us meet our 2030 gross emission reduction targets in 2024/25.

Our emissions are independently audited annually by Toitū Envirocare.

We report annually on our service critical assets and contracts

Each year we identify service critical assets to ensure ongoing business continuity, such as our Data Exchange Platform, which is a core platform for collection and distribution (exchange) of tertiary education organisation funding data used in funding and monitoring tertiary education organisations. We report annually on relevant asset performance indicators for service critical assets in our Annual Report.

Values and behaviours

Tikanga me te whakatinana

Our values and behaviours reflect the essence of who we are, guide the way we work together and are pivotal to achieving our strategic intentions

Work together for success

WE DO THIS BY:

actively looking for input from others
crafting a safe, open environment
for sharing ideas
valuing other people's
contributions
and perspectives

Connect with people

WE DO THIS BY:

creating culturally affirming
spaces with shared dignity
treating others with kindness
respect and generosity
supporting who we
work with and the
work they do

Service matters

WE DO THIS BY:

asking questions and listening,
with empathy, to understand
helping everyone involved by resolving
promptly and accurately
learning from the people we work
with and for

Do the right thing

WE DO THIS BY:

being consistent with our talk and walk
acting with honesty and accountability,
even when it's hard
giving it our all and delivering



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