



# Cohort-based programme completion and apprentice retention rates for industry training: *summary of consultation feedback*

This paper contains a high-level overview of the proposals and the feedback we received during the consultation period. A detailed view of the feedback for each proposal, including survey scores, and our responses to any comments made is set out in the Appendix.

## Background

We have been working with the industry training sector to improve the methodology for calculating the programme completion educational performance indicator, and introduce a new measure to report on the retention of apprentices.

Late in 2015, we held a workshop with representatives from five industry training organisations (ITOs). We received their feedback and agreement on the general approach of a cohort-based methodology. Following the workshop, we consulted on the draft methodology.

## Summary of feedback

We consulted on two main proposals. One was to change the existing programme completion measure to a cohort-based methodology, and the other was to introduce a retention measure for New Zealand Apprentices. Generally, respondents were supportive of the two proposed measures.

Nine parties in total responded to the consultation paper. Seven responses were submitted through the online survey, with each responding to the specific proposals outlined in the survey. We also received two paper-based submissions. Not all parties responded to all proposals.

Organisation type	Number of respondents
Industry Training Organisation	6
Private Training Establishments	2
Peak Body (Industry Training Federation)	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>

We received comprehensive feedback and some suggestions for change. A high level summary of the survey results and feedback are set out below, while the actual scores and feedback, and our response to that feedback, are set out in detail in the Appendix.

When deciding whether or not to implement a suggestion, we have maintained our focus on ensuring the measure remains simple and transparent, and easy to replicate.

### *Use a starting cohort-based methodology for the programme completion rate*

Of nine respondents, six respondents (67%) agreed or strongly agreed with using a starting cohort-based methodology for programme completion. Only one respondent (11%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

One respondent disagreed or strongly disagreed with a stand-down period of five years after a withdrawal before being able to enter a new cohort. A couple of respondents want to exclude all unfunded learners, and learners that withdrew within 90 days of first enrolling.

**Our response:** We will proceed with the proposal to use a starting cohort to measure programme completions. We will also proceed with a five year stand down period, unless it is shown to adversely affect performance rates. All learners who are enrolled for one month or more (funded or unfunded) will enter into a cohort.

### *Grouping NZQF levels and learner types*

**Industry trainees at levels 1 to 3:** Of seven respondents, six respondents (86%) agreed with grouping industry trainees at levels 1 to 3, and no respondent disagreed.

**Industry trainees at levels 4 to 7:** Of seven respondents, four (57%) agreed grouping industry trainees at levels 4 to 7, and one respondent (14%) disagreed. The feedback was that industry trainees that met the New Zealand Apprenticeship criteria be treated as New Zealand Apprentices.

**Modern Apprentices and New Zealand Apprentices:** Six respondents (86%) agreed or strongly agreed with grouping apprentices together, and no respondents disagreed.

Feedback from two respondents suggested that cohorts could be grouped by credits or duration, rather than levels, and industry trainees that met or exceeded the apprenticeship criteria should be grouped with apprentices.

**Our response:** At any NZQF level, we acknowledge that there are qualifications that are significantly shorter or longer (and smaller or larger) than the majority of qualifications at those levels. However, we believe that grouping by NZQF level best manages the trade-offs between simplicity, timeliness and completeness.

Learners have also been grouped based on how the enrolments are funded. Apprenticeships are funded at a higher rate and have different requirements, such as those set out in the Code of Good Practice for New Zealand Apprenticeships, and will be reported separately.

### *Learner completions*

Of seven respondents, five (71%) agreed or strongly agreed that a completion is counted if the learner completes a programme at the same level in which they enrolled in the starting cohort year. One respondent (14%) disagreed with this proposal.

The feedback was that we should use the same approach as the Ministry of Education (MoE), which counts a completion if it occurs at the same or higher level of the original enrolment.

**Our response:** We are wanting to measure the percentage of completions at the level in which the learner enrolled. Most respondents supported this, and there will be no change.

### **Timeframes for measuring completions**

**Industry training completions at levels 1 to 3 within 3 years:** Of seven respondents, four (57%) agreed with a three-year completion for industry trainees at levels 1 to 3, and no respondent disagreed.

**Industry training completions at levels 4 to 7 within 4 years:** Of seven respondents, three (43%) agreed with a four-year completion for industry trainees at levels 4 to 7, and 1 respondent (14%) disagreed. The feedback was that industry trainees that met the New Zealand Apprenticeship criteria be given the same timeframe as New Zealand Apprentices.

**Apprenticeship completions within 6 years:** Of seven respondents, three (43%) agreed with a six year timeframe for apprentices, and two respondents (28%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. The feedback was that six years was too short, and that their own data showed a reasonable shift in completions between years 6 and 7.

**Our response:** As noted earlier, learners have also been grouped based how the enrolments are funded. In relation to the apprenticeship timeframe, currently we do not have enough years' worth of data in the ITR to assess whether seven years is appropriate. If we find that a reasonable increase occurs between years 6 and 7, we will adjust the timeframe for apprentices. Otherwise the proposed timeframes will remain.

### **Apprentice retention**

Of eight respondents, six (75%) agreed or strongly agreed with introducing a retention measure for apprentices. No respondents disagreed with this proposal.

**Our response:** We will proceed with this measure.

### **Outcomes of feedback and changes to the methodology**

Based on the majority of positive support, we will finalise this methodology, including the change set out below, and review a couple of items in the future once there is more data.

#### **Excluding all enrolments that start and end in the same calendar month**

Our proposed methodology excludes withdrawn enrolments that start and end in the same month from the programme completion indicator. We will expand this to include all enrolments that start and end in the same calendar month, even if they complete.

The measure should reflect the outcomes of learners undertaking a programme of training. An enrolment that completes within a month indicates that learning has already occurred and the awarding of the qualification is recognition of prior learning.

### **What happens next?**

Using this methodology, we will provide ITOs with draft reports for the 2015 reporting year. Formal publication of results will happen in 2017 for the 2016 reporting year.

We will also evaluate the measures in 2019 to ensure the methodology is working as expected and no significant issues have been identified.

## Appendix: Survey scores and feedback for each proposal

This appendix sets out the scores for each of the proposals of the consultation survey, and our response to the feedback received, which has been grouped under general themes and comments.

There were nine responses in total. Seven were submitted through the survey, and each responded to the specific proposals outlined in the survey. We received two other submissions. We have recorded whether or not these two submissions supported (or not) a starting cohort-based methodology and a retention measure for apprentices, but have not inferred any other of their responses against the specific proposals.

### Use a starting cohort-based methodology for the programme completion rate

We propose using a cohort-based methodology to measure programme completions for ITOs.

Proposal	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total responses	Average rating
Use a starting cohort-based methodology for the programme completion rate	0.0% 0	11.1% 1	22.2% 2	55.6% 5	11.1% 1	9	3.7
The starting cohort includes all enrolments except for: enrolments deleted from the ITR, enrolments withdrawn and the participation start date and end date are in the same calendar month, and enrolments in limited credit programmes	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	28.6% 2	57.1% 4	14.3% 1	7	3.9
Include the first enrolment at an ITO in an NZQF level in a year	14.3% 1	0.0% 0	28.6% 2	57.1% 4	0.0% 0	7	3.3
Allow a learner to re-enter a cohort at the same level if they complete an earlier enrolment	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	42.9% 3	57.1% 4	0.0% 0	7	3.6
Allow a learner to enter a new cohort at the same level if it has been more than five years since the learner withdrew at the same level	14.3% 1	0.0% 0	42.9% 3	42.9% 3	0.0% 0	7	3.1
Feedback	TEC response						
Learners must be active for 4 or more months to be included, to recognise the employment factor at play with industry training Apprentices who withdraw within 90 days should be excluded from the measure	<p>Some employers have a stand down period before they will sign up their employees into funded, formal training.</p> <p>If employers have a history of employing people only to terminate the employment within 90 days, then the ITO should consider whether it is appropriate to enrol the learner before the 90-day employment trial is complete.</p> <p>Analysis of the reasons for withdrawing from training within 90 days indicates that only 1.6% of all withdrawals occurred due to loss of job or grace period expiring. ITOs are accountable for the learners they enrol, and for events that are sometimes beyond their control.</p> <p>The current programme completion rate includes all learners, not just those funded for 4 or more months.</p> <p><i>Outcome: No change</i></p>						

Feedback	TEC response
Do not include unfunded learners even if they complete	<p>All unfunded learners are included in the current credit achievement and programme completion rates. Unfunded learners who are enrolled for more than one month will be included in the new cohort-based completion rate.</p> <p><i>Outcome: No change</i></p>
<p>A cohort-based approach is not suitable to an industry training environment due to employment patterns, not full time study, non-semester based; subsequently, it is not appropriate to compare ITO results with other TEOs due to different enrolment cycles and dynamics in industry training</p>	<p>A cohort-based approach is appropriate for all tertiary education sectors. It is expected that if a learner enters a period of training or study, then a percentage will complete within a set period of time. The suggested nuances of the industry training sector are accounted for in the respective timeframes for completion.</p> <p>In terms of comparison, it is useful to compare across sectors when comparing, for example, similar provision such as New Zealand Apprenticeships versus managed apprenticeships. The ability to compare is allowed for in different timeframes in which to complete within the different sectors, and reflect how long learners actually take to complete before there is minimal change in the number of completions.</p> <p><i>Outcome: No change</i></p>
The stand down period of 5 years is too long before a withdrawn learner can enter a new cohort	<p>Five years was selected as this is the period used by the Ministry of Education (MoE) in their cohort completion rate for TEIs and ITPs. Five years is seen to be a reasonable period in which the new enrolment would be seen to reflect a period of new and different learning. This is a significant difference to MoE's industry training completion rate, which allows no re-entry into a cohort for industry training.</p> <p><i>Outcome: No change, unless it is found that the timeframe adversely affects completion rates</i></p>
<p>There is a concern regarding learners that transition across levels or learner type will affect the relevant cohort completion rates</p> <p><i>(For example, a level 3 programme pre-TRoQ to a level 4 programme post-TRoQ or, in 2014, the transfer of level 4 industry trainees to New Zealand Apprenticeships.)</i></p>	<p>We acknowledge that the withdrawal and re-enrolment of approximately 9,000 industry trainees in 2014 will affect the cohort completion rates temporarily. This is explainable and reflects certain activity in one cohort year.</p> <p>The MOE's cohort completion rate reports on learners who complete at the same or higher level. It also groups apprentices and apprentice-like trainees. The TEC's measure can be used to complement the Ministry's measure.</p> <p>We will be keeping the methodology and calculations simple, and will not be accounting for a transfer of fund type.</p> <p><i>Outcome: No change</i></p>
If a learner transfers to another programme at a higher level, and does not complete the original programme, this may be a disincentive for TEOs to encourage student progression	<p>For industry training, this is an issue if the transfer is between levels 3 and 4, or from industry trainee to apprentice. This scenario exists now for a variety of reasons. We don't believe this will happen to such an extent that it would significantly affect an organisation's rate.</p> <p><i>Outcome: No change</i></p>
Prior to 2014, learners who could not enrol as a Modern Apprentice (due to age barriers) were enrolled as industry trainees in the same programmes, and subsequently have tighter timeframes in which to complete (ie, 4 years vs 6 years)	<p>We acknowledge that there is shorter timeframe for the same programme, by mere fact of the learner type.</p> <p>However, it is possible that a number of these industry trainees were withdrawn from their industry training programmes in 2014 and re-enrolled as New Zealand Apprentices, re-setting their expected timeframes.</p> <p><i>Outcome: No change</i></p>

## Grouping NZQF levels or learner types

Proposal	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total responses	Average rating
Industry trainees levels 1 to 3	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	14.3% 1	85.7% 6	0.0% 0	7	3.9
Industry trainees levels 4 to 7	0.0% 0	14.3% 1	28.6% 2	57.1% 4	0.0% 0	7	3.4
Modern Apprentices and New Zealand Apprentices	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	14.3% 1	71.4% 5	14.3% 1	7	4.0
Feedback	TEC response						
The cohorts should be grouped by credit ranges or nominated duration ranges, not NZQF level	<p>Levels of training are more aligned with each other than credit levels or expected durations. Levels focus on the degree of learning and graduate outcomes at those levels, as opposed to simply the size or length of those programmes.</p> <p>Grouping by level enables easy tracking of achievement towards the Better Public Services Result 6: Increase the proportion of 25 - 34 year olds with advanced trade programmes, diplomas and degrees (at Level 4 or above). This approach aligns with the approach for other sectors.</p> <p><i>Outcome: No change</i></p>						
Industry trainees that meet or exceed the New Zealand Apprenticeship criteria should be included in the New Zealand Apprenticeship cohort	<p>We fund New Zealand Apprenticeships and Modern Apprentices at a higher rate reflecting both the quality of inputs and outcomes expected. We are interested in the performance of these particular programmes.</p> <p>The MOE has a cohort completion rate that groups New Zealand Apprentices, Modern Apprentices, and industry trainees that meet or exceed the New Zealand Apprenticeship criteria.</p> <p><i>Outcome: No change</i></p>						

## Learner completions

A completion is only counted if the learner completes a programme at the same level in which they enrolled in the starting cohort year.

Proposal	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total responses	Average rating
Include a learner completion if the learner completes a programme at the same NZQF level as the programme in which the learner started	0.0% 0	14.3% 1	14.3% 1	57.1% 4	14.3% 1	7	3.7
Feedback	TEC response						
Include completions if learners complete at the same <u>or higher</u> level as the programme in which they started, to eliminate the effect of learners changing programme levels.	<p>The MOE's cohort completion rate reports on learners who complete at the same or higher level. The TEC's measure can be used to complement the Ministry's measure.</p> <p><i>Outcome: No change</i></p>						

## Timeframes for measuring completions

Proposal	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total responses	Average rating
Measure completions for industry trainees at levels 1 to 3 within three years	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	42.9% 3	57.1% 4	0.0% 0	7	3.6
Measure completions for industry trainees at levels 4 to 7 within four years	0.0% 0	14.3% 1	42.9% 3	42.9% 3	0.0% 0	7	3.3
Measure completions for apprentices within six years	14.3% 1	14.3% 1	28.6% 2	42.9% 3	0.0% 0	7	3.0
Feedback	TEC response						
Six years for apprenticeships may be too short; some ITOs find that there are still a number of completions occurring in year seven	<p>Currently we do not have seven years of data from the ITR and it is difficult to fully assess an appropriate duration for apprenticeships. If we find that a significant increase occurs between years 6 and 7, we will adjust the timeframe if needed.</p> <p><i>Outcome: Review timeframe for apprenticeships after 2017</i></p>						
The timeframes are quite rigid, where programmes are not uniform in size or duration, for example level 3 40 credits versus level 3 125 credits	<p>The timeframes have been selected based on when the completion rates begin to plateau. For levels 1 to 3 this occurs at year 3, and for levels 4 to 7 this occurs at year 4.</p> <p>However, as part of the post-implementation review, we will look at the timeframes and adjust these if needed.</p> <p><i>Outcome: No change</i></p>						
Why are the timeframes for industry trainees and apprentices who are training at the same level different?	<p>Apprenticeships tend to be, on average, longer and bigger than industry training programmes, even at the same level.</p> <p><i>Outcome: No change</i></p>						
Allowances in the timeframes should be made for the differences between provider-based programmes and programmes based in the workplace	<p>It is not clear whether this relates to programmes and qualifications across the tertiary education sector or specifically within industry training.</p> <p>If it is across the sector, then timeframes are different, where necessary, and have been selected based on the point where minimal changes are seen between years.</p> <p>If it is industry training-specific, we cannot identify what programmes may be provider-based. However, to be eligible for funding, the majority of the training must occur on-the-job. It is our intention to measure the industry training system irrespective of the method of delivery of an industry training programme.</p> <p><i>Outcome: No change</i></p>						

## Apprentice retention

Proposal	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total responses	Average rating
Measure the retention of Modern Apprentices and New Zealand Apprentices	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	25.0% 2	75.0% 6	0.0% 0	8	3.8
A learner is counted as retained if the number of funded months is 13 months or more in year+1	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	28.6% 2	71.4% 5	0.0% 0	7	3.7

Feedback	TEC response
The 1 <sup>st</sup> year completion rate for New Zealand Apprentices should be included in the retention rate, and should not be reported separately; the assumption is that if an apprentice completes, they are retained	The retention rate reflects the percentage of apprentices who are still in training after one year. If an apprentice has completed within 12 months, then they are no longer training. It is valuable to know the proportion that complete within one year. However, it is more important to understand the percentage of apprentices who are no longer training after one year. <i>Outcome: No change</i>

## General feedback

Feedback	TEC response
The new measures should not be retrospectively applied, and should only apply for cohorts from 2017	Creating the first cohorts in 2017 means that apprenticeship completions will not be reported until 2023 (or 2024 if a seven-year period is introduced). We expect that trainee activity and progression to date would be the same from 2017 onwards (putting aside unique cohort events such as industry downturn or the Canterbury earthquakes). There is nothing to suggest that cohorts established from 2011 are not representative of normal training activity and we do not believe it is necessary to delay implementation. <i>Outcome: No change</i>
The new measure should be implemented gradually, and a review be conducted within two years to determine the effects of the change	The new measure will be implemented officially for the 2017 reporting year. However, we will review these within a few years to ensure they are appropriate, for example, the timeframes in which to complete, and whether the grouped levels are appropriate. These new measures will be used alongside other measures, such as the current credit achievement rate and the under-achievement offset. <i>Outcome: Post-implementation review after 2 years</i>
Levels should be reported separately and not grouped levels 1 to 3 and levels 4 to 7 as each ITO establishes qualifications appropriate to their industry requirements; reporting these separately allows an ITO to benchmark itself appropriate to its own industry contexts	Each ITO will receive twice-monthly reports showing rates at each individual level as well as grouped. When these are published each year, once performance has been finalised, then they will be grouped levels 1 to 3, and levels 4 to 7. Reporting them separately would result in up to eight separate rates per ITO. However, ITOs would be free to publish their own rates at separate NZQF levels. <i>Outcome: No change</i>
The consultation paper refers to 'learner'; however, the measure is at an enrolment level so should be updated to read 'learner enrolment'	This was an error in the paper, and should have referred to 'learner enrolment'. <i>Outcome: The term 'learner enrolment' will be used</i>

Feedback	TEC response
<p>There are factors that influence completion which ITOs do have greater agency over, including assessment models and practices, resource design and development, and pastoral support. However, research tells us that these factors apply to a very small percentage of non-completions. It is therefore questionable whether programme completion helps Government to judge the quality of the educational practices of an ITO, or help TEC make rationing decisions.</p>	<p>Credit achievement and programme completion measures will form a part of an overall package of outputs and outcomes.</p> <p>We use a variety of measures and tools to help assess an ITO's overall performance, including information from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.</p> <p>However, measuring credit achievement and programme completion is important as an indicator of the extent to which support for work-based training through the Industry Training Fund is developing skilled employees for industries.</p> <p><i>Outcome: The TEC will work in consultation with the wider education sector, including TEOs, to develop a set of learner outcomes as a measure of performance.</i></p>



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