

FAQs for Industry members and Education providers

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Consultation and transition into Industry Skills Board

Q: What is the Cabinet decision following the September 2024 consultation on the future VET system?

A: The Government asked people for feedback on their proposals on what a new VET system could look like. Following that process, [decisions have been made by Cabinet](#).

The Government has agreed to amend the Education and Training Act 2020 to disestablish Te Pūkenga and allow institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs) to be established as autonomous entities. These may be standalone or as part of a federation.

The implications for Workforce Development Councils (WDCs), in particular, are:

- the standard setting functions currently delivered by WDCs will be taken over by Industry Skills Boards (ISBs)
- To ensure the design meets the needs of industry, a targeted consultation will take place on two work-based learning options
- [Information on these options](#) and a targeted consultation process has begun with selected industry bodies and closes on the 21 February 2025. There will be hui for this consultation during the weeks of 3rd and 10th February.
- WDCs will continue to operate in the interim.

Q: What does this change mean for me?

A: The [Government is seeking further input](#) on how work-based learning should be structured.

[This document outlines](#) the two models for work-based learning that the Government is considering. One was consulted on in 2024, and the other is a new model:

- **Independent Work-based Learning.** In this model, the work-based learning divisions in Te Pūkenga would be moved to a separate transitional entity, then become a number of separate providers with industry or other private ownership. This was presented as Option B in the 2024 consultation.
- **Collaborative Work-based Learning.** In this model, all apprenticeships and traineeships would involve both a provider to manage the education of the learner and an ISB to provide pastoral care. The work-based learning divisions of Te Pūkenga would be dissolved, with their programmes and learners moving into the ITPs that are established out of Te Pūkenga (or in some cases to a PTE or Wānanga). Their assets and staff would be split across a provider and an ISB.

Final decisions are expected to be made in April 2025.

Ringa Hora will continue to deliver our functions, carry out our mahi on qualifications and assurance, and engage with industry and training providers until the new Industry Skills Boards are operational.

Q: Will I get a chance to have some input into the specifics of the new VET system? If so, how?

A: A targeted set of mainly industry representatives have been invited to participate and provide feedback on which model they prefer. This targeted consultation closes at 5pm on Friday 21 February.

All industries, employers, organisations and the public will have the opportunity to submit on legislative changes through the select committee process. Details regarding the select committee process are yet to be confirmed.

Q: What's the Government's rationale behind this decision?

A: The Government will reshape vocational education and training to return decision making to regions and enable greater industry input into work-based learning.

The Government has committed to disestablishing Te Pūkenga and replacing it with a system that restores regional decision-making and connections between tertiary education providers.

The Government's aim is to ensure learners across New Zealand have access to vocational education and training with regional provision, and that important industry and national needs are met.

Q: What is the overall period for this change?

A: The new system and new structures will be operational from 1 January 2026. Implementation activity will be carried out through 2025 to prepare for the new system.

This includes consultation with industry, learners and others interested in industry-led vocational education and training; as well as supporting the key decisions that will be made by Cabinet in the first half of 2025, including the number and location of standalone ITPs, establishment of possible PTEs, the number and industry coverage of ISBs, the provision of work-based learning, and changes to the funding system to support the redesigned system.

We will update you as we know more and as things develop over the coming weeks and months.

Q: How will the transition affect funding and resource allocation for industry training?

A: The funding system for work-based learning could be different depending on which model the Government adopts. However, in both cases the Government will fund ISBs for standards-setting work. An ISB will also be able to charge fees to providers for the quality assurance functions and services they undertake, like moderation, and programme endorsement.

The WDCs are currently able to request that the Minister for Vocational Education introduces an industry levy to fund their work. The ISBs will keep this ability, and some of the barriers to introducing a levy will be lowered.

The [consultation paper](#) has details on funding methods for each of the two models proposed.

Q: Will the new system continue to recognise and address the unique needs of smaller industries?

A: Yes. Amplifying the voice of our industries across the Service, both small and large, is vitally important and will continue to be a focus of ISBs.

Q: How will the new system ensure that industry needs and voices are still heard and represented?

A: ISBs will continue to be focused on delivering what their industries want and need, and will gather industry voice to guide their standard-setting functions, workforce analysis and planning and investment advice. We will keep you updated as we know receive more details.

Q: When are we likely to receive more information?

A: More information will be released as final decisions are expected to be made in April 2025. We will continue to keep you updated as we receive more details.

Employers and learners

Q: Will there be any disruptions to current training programmes and apprenticeships?

A: There may be changes to how and where programmes are delivered. The continuation and delivery of programmes and courses at individual institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs) is a Te Pūkenga business decision.

Q: Will it be easier to help my employees to earn these credentials?

A: Decisions on the design of the work-based learning system and coverage of Industry Skills Boards is expected to be made by Cabinet in the first half of 2025. We will update you once we know more.

Standard-setting, Qualifications and Quality Assurance

Q: What will happen with your work with Qualifications and Quality Assurance?

A: We will continue with our mahi until further decisions have been made and/or the new system is in place. You can view our ongoing [Qualifications reviews and developments](#) and [Quality Assurance](#) work on our website.

Q: How will the changes impact current skill standards and qualifications, work-based learning and credentials?

A: We will continue with our mahi on current skill standards and qualifications until further decisions have been made and/or the new system is in place. For more information on our qualification developments and reviews, [click here](#).

Q: After the transition, who will be responsible for setting and maintaining qualification standards?

A: Industry Skills Boards will be responsible for setting and maintaining qualification standards.

The number of ISBs is yet to be determined. To ensure each one is of sufficient scale and viability there likely won't be more than eight, and each one won't necessarily cover the same collection of sectors that WDCs currently do.

In addition, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) will take on standards-setting for some industries, although every sector that currently has work-based learning will be covered by an ISB.

Q: How will training providers ensure that their programmes align with industry needs?

A: Under both models, any provider – the new ITPs, private providers, and Wānanga – will be able to offer both work-based and provider-based programmes. Providers will still need to use ISB-developed qualifications and standards, which are developed in response to industry needs, have their programmes endorsed and externally moderated by ISBs, and meet appropriate TEC and NZQA requirements.

Q: How will these changes impact the importance of national consistency of delivery from providers across the country?

A: One of the features of Te Pūkenga was that there would be unified programmes across the country. With polytechnics now being regional it will be up to each provider to develop their own programme. These programmes need to be endorsed by the standard-setting body; however, providers can develop their own programmes based on regional needs.

It is not yet clear if there will be other implications that could impact national consistency based on the role of the standard-setting entity and if there are any changes to qualification development requirements set down by NZQA.

Q: What happens to the Private Training Providers in these changes?

A: Private Training Providers will continue to exist.

Each model has different implications for what happens to the Work-based Learning divisions of Te Pūkenga (the former ITOs), and the learners and programmes they manage. It also has implications for other providers – ITPs, private training organisations, and Wānanga – who currently offer, or might want to offer, work-based programmes. [See the consultation paper for more details.](#)

Industry Engagement

Q: How will industry engagement and partnerships be facilitated in the new system?

A: Industry engagement and partnership with industry could be different depending on the model the Government adopts. Final decisions on implementing the chosen model of Industry Skills Boards are expected to be made by April 2025. We will update you once we know more.

Q: What changes can we expect in the processes for feedback, consultation, and collaboration?

A: Final decisions on implementing the chosen model of Industry Skills Boards are expected to be made by April 2025. We will update you once we know more.