

03 March 2021

Minister of Education, Hon. Chris Hipkins  
[c.hipkins@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:c.hipkins@ministers.govt.nz)

Tēnā koe e te Minita

## **Proposed changes to the Teaching Council's Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Policy in response to the continued COVID-19 pandemic**

The purpose of this letter is to meet the Teaching Council's obligations under the Education Act 2020 [s.479(1)(f)]. We are proposing re-instating temporary changes to our ITE Policy in response to COVID-19 and seek to consult you on this proposal.

### *Background*

In April 2020 the Teaching Council consulted you on a proposal to make temporary changes to our Initial Teacher Education Policy<sup>1</sup>, as required in the Education Act 2020 [s.479 (1)(f)]. You supported the approach we proposed, and the temporary changes helped ITE providers and student teachers respond to the pandemic in 2020. This included the successful graduation of over 400 new, quality teachers who would otherwise not have met the Teaching Council's requirements due to COVID.

The temporary changes ended on 1 January 2021. The Teaching Council committed to considering re-implementing them if COVID-19 caused significant disruption to the ITE sector in 2021.

### *We are consulting you about re-instating similar changes you supported last year*

Following the two recent increases in Alert Levels, ITE providers nationwide have contacted the Teaching Council to notify us that their planned programmes are being significantly disrupted, including schools and centres withdrawing from offering student teachers access to practical experience. As such we are consulting you about re-instating similar temporary policy changes you supported in 2020.

If you support our proposed approach, we plan to immediately roll out policy changes 2–6 (see footnote). We will hold back the optional 25 percent reduction in total practical experience requirements at this time as we do not believe the current level of impact warrants this approach. If it becomes apparent that the reduction is also needed, we will work with the Ministry of Education to consider options for extending the enhanced induction and mentoring programme.

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<sup>1</sup> The temporary policy changes are:

1. A new temporary change in the ITE policy that allows for a 25 percent reduction in practicum requirements, in combination with additional induction and mentoring support.
2. A temporary removal of the requirement for 'blocks' of consecutive practicum experience.
3. A temporary removal of the requirement for practicum at 'away' schools or centres.
4. A temporary removal of the requirement for employment- and field-based ECE ITE student teachers to be employed for a minimum of 12 hours per week at an ECE centre.
5. The Teaching Council will support field-based and employment-based ITE programmes to investigate and propose ways to use students' historical and future field and employment practice to meet practicum requirements.
6. The Teaching Council will support ITE providers to investigate and propose 'alternative practicum experiences' that fulfil the provider's practicum learning outcomes.



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*Next steps*

Provided you raise no concerns with our proposed approach, the Teaching Council will seek to notify ITE providers of the re-instated temporary policy changes as quickly as possible. This will give providers the certainty they need to begin redesigning programmes, reassuring their student teachers, and liaising with their partner schools and ECE centres.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Nāku ā ngākau pono,

Lesley Hoskin  
Chief Executive