



Bulletin – Tertiary Providers and International

2nd July, 2020

Targeted Training Apprenticeship Fund now available

The Targeted Training and Apprenticeship Fund (TTAF) is now available. The fund will make training fees-free from 1 July 2020 until 31 December 2022 for all apprenticeships and for vocational programmes within targeted areas at level 3-7 (excluding degrees) at tertiary providers or workplace training. The targeted areas are primary industries, construction, community support, manufacturing and mechanical engineering and technology, electrical engineering and road transport related to operating heavy vehicles.

The [list of qualifications](#) covered by the fund are available on the Tertiary Education Commission's website. For more information on the fund, visit [Targeted Training and Apprenticeship Fund](#).

In addition, the Government recently announced an Apprenticeship Support Programme to help retain and take on new apprentices. This includes Apprenticeship Boost to help employers pay for new and existing apprentices in their first two years of training. This will be available from August 2020. More information about the Apprenticeship Support Programmes is available from the [Work and Income](#) website.

Border exemption requests

The New Zealand border is currently closed to almost all travellers except New Zealand citizens and residents. For those who are not a New Zealand citizen or resident, there is a process for requesting an exception to the border restrictions if there is a critical purpose for travelling to New Zealand.

The process for requesting an exception for "other critical workers" (formerly essential workers) is being managed by Immigration New Zealand, which is part of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). Employers will need to request an exception from Immigration NZ on their employee's behalf – requests from individual workers will not be considered. The Ministry of Education (MoE) is not a decision maker in this exemptions process, but will provide guidance on applications if Immigration NZ requests this.

The bar for being granted an exception to the border restrictions is set high to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health of people already in New Zealand. We are advised by Immigration NZ that holding an existing essential skills visa or being employed in a position that is on the skills shortage list is not sufficient to meet the 'critical worker' criteria for this process.

If you have existing staff who are not New Zealand residents or citizens and who are currently overseas, or if you are looking to recruit new staff from overseas, you should consider the latest Immigration NZ guidance which can be found [here](#). All applications for “other critical workers” must be made directly to MBIE via employerborderexceptions@mbie.govt.nz.

The Ministry of Education are working with other key government agencies, to ensure the interests and perspectives of the education sector are considered in any cross government work on lifting border restrictions.

We hope that a suitable model can be developed so we can start to bring in small numbers and begin building up towards 2021.

Reinstatement of Fees free entitlement of learners affected by COVID-19

Many learners have been adversely affected by COVID-19 either by not being able to participate fully in their studies or training, or due to illness or financial hardship. This has resulted in some learners withdrawing from their study or training or not completing courses.

Tertiary Education Organisations (TEOs) should confirm to eligible learners who used their entitlement for study or training in 2020 that there is a process to reinstate Fees Free entitlements in certain circumstances.

Some or all of learners’ Fees Free entitlement may be reinstated if they are an eligible learner and:

- they withdrew from study or training due to the impact of COVID-19; or
- their study or training was adversely affected due to the impact of COVID-19

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) will reinstate the entitlements of learners who withdrew from 23 March to 30 June 2020, without learners needing to appeal. Learners’ entitlements will be reinstated in the next few months.

For withdrawals outside of the period from 23 March to 30 June 2020, or where learners didn’t withdraw, but their studies were adversely affected, learners can appeal their entitlement use. The Fees Free website is currently being updated and the changes will be live in August 2020. From then on, learners will be able to appeal by entering their national student number (NSN) on the homepage and completing the entitlement appeals form, on the results page.

If a learner needs to appeal before August 2020 (e.g. they have used their Fees Free entitlement and wish to enrol in a new course), please contact TEC on 0800 601 301 or email customerservice@tec.govt.nz.

To support this process and your learners, TEC ask that TEOs continue to report all Fees Free eligible learners via the ‘Fees Free All Enrolments and Costs return’, including those who have been affected by COVID-19. Furthermore, TEC request that ITOs report all trainees status’ accurately as either active, grace, on hold or withdrawn.

Fees Free statutory declaration interim process ending 5th July

From 6 July, the TEC will return to the standard operating process for Fees Free eligibility verification where learners need to make a statutory declaration in the presence of an authorised person (for example, a JP) and get their statutory declaration form signed by the authorised person. The interim process that TEC introduced during the lockdown will cease.

This was a temporary arrangement where TEC completed the verification process through phone calls so that learners could still be enrolled and complete the Fees Free eligibility process during lockdown.

Statutory declarations sent to TEC on or before 5th July will be verified through the interim process.

As always, if you have any questions please [contact TEC](#) or talk to your TEC relationship manager.

Things change quickly so stay up to date by following the links below:

For health advice, please refer to the Ministry of Health's website.

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

For Cross-agency information about COVID-19 (novel coronavirus), including health advice and travel restrictions visit the All-of-Government website <https://www.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/>

To keep updated on travel restrictions and visa information visit

<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/news-notifications/coronavirus-update-inz-response>

For additional advice for tertiary providers/whare wananga visit the Ministry of Education website <http://www.education.govt.nz/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-3/>