



**Briefing Note:** Joint Work Programme:  
Language Competency Requirements for Pacific  
Language Speakers Gaining Teacher Registration

<b>To:</b>	Hon Aupito William Sio, Associate Minister of Education		
<b>Date:</b>	9 December 2021	<b>Priority:</b>	Medium
<b>Security Level:</b>	Budget Sensitive	<b>METIS No:</b>	1278136
<b>Drafter:</b>	Toby Patrick	<b>DDI:</b>	9(2)(a)
<b>Key Contacts:</b>	Helen Walter, Ministry of Education		
	Pauline Barnes, Teaching Council		
<b>Messaging seen by Communications team:</b>	N/A	<b>Round Robin:</b>	No

### Purpose of Paper

This paper sets out the joint work programme to be undertaken by the Ministry of Education, the Teaching Council, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, and the Ministry for Pacific Peoples on language competency requirements for speakers of Pacific languages who want to gain New Zealand teacher registration. This follows our discussion with you on 21 October, and our earlier paper: *Language Competency Requirements for Registered Pacific Teachers* [METIS 1272069].

This paper is on the agenda for your agency meeting on Monday, 13 December.

### Proactive Release

**Agree** that this Briefing Note will be proactively released once it has been considered by you, with any information that may need to be withheld done so in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982.

Agree / Disagree

Ben O'Meara  
Group Manager  
Te Puna Kaupapahere  
Ministry of Education  
09/12/2021

L. Hoskin

Lesley Hoskin  
Chief Executive  
Teaching Council  
09/12/2021

Hon Aupito William Sio  
Associate Minister of Education

13/12/2021

## Background

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1. On 14 October 2021, we provided a Briefing Note about the English language competency requirements for entry into initial teacher education (ITE) programmes and teacher registration in New Zealand (including the use of English language tests, such as IELTS<sup>1</sup>, to demonstrate language competency), and Pacific educators' concerns about this requirement (METIS 1272069: *Language Competency Requirements for Registered Pacific Teachers*).
2. Following our meeting with you on 21 October, the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Teaching Council (the Council), the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and the Ministry for Pacific Peoples (MPP) have developed a joint work programme to address these concerns (see Annex 1).

## Joint work programme

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3. Included in this joint work programme are:
  - a. policy work on adding one or more Pacific languages (as an option alongside te reo Māori and English) to the language competency requirements for entry into ITE and New Zealand teacher registration (this will be enabled by legislative amendments which have been introduced through the Education and Training Amendment Bill (No 2), clarifying that the Council's role is to regulate teaching in all language settings, not just te reo and English);
  - b. promotion of the full range of evidence accepted by the Council for English language competency (other than IELTS);
  - c. work with Sosaiete A'oga Amata Sāmoa I Aotearoa (SAASIA) and other groups to assess how many of their unregistered Pacific teaching workforce may want to get registered; and
  - d. the development of a pilot programme of personalised support (e.g. language test fees, access to bridging programmes, English language/study skills tutoring) for some current unregistered Pacific teachers who want to complete a New Zealand ITE programme and gain teacher registration.
4. This joint work programme is part of a wider cross-agency work programme to support Pacific education, including work to grow and strengthen Pacific bilingual and immersion education pathways and to implement the Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020-2030. Further advice about this will be provided to you in future papers.
5. This work also responds to feedback gathered through MPP's consultation on the draft Pacific Languages Strategy. Fono attendees raised the need for more qualified teachers who are fluent in Pacific languages and said that current English language requirements are a barrier to achieving this and are not fit-for-purpose. Any actions to address these issues through our joint work programme will also be part of the Action Plan to implement the Pacific Languages Strategy.
6. The Teaching Council is not able to use teacher fees and levies for the pilot programme of personalised support for unregistered Pacific teachers. The Ministry has identified funding within Vote Education baselines which can be used to support this work.

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<sup>1</sup> International English Language Testing System

## Next Steps

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7. We are scheduled to discuss this work programme with you on Monday, 13 December.
8. Following your feedback, the Ministry, the Council, NZQA and MPP will work together to progress this work programme.
9. We will provide you with regular updates on this work programme.

## Annexes

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Annex 1: Work programme: Language Competency Requirements for Speakers of Pacific Languages Wanting to Become NZ Registered Teachers

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Language competency requirements for speakers of Pacific languages wanting to become NZ registered teachers</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Joint work programme of the Ministry of Education [MoE], the Teaching Council [TC], New Zealand Qualifications Authority [NZQA] and the Ministry for Pacific Peoples [MPP]</p>	
<p><b>Context</b></p>	<p>To enter NZ Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and to become a NZ registered teacher, applicants must meet language competency requirements in either English or te reo Māori. Some applicants will need to prove their language competency by doing one of eight English language tests recognised by the Teaching Council (such as IELTS, the International English Language Testing System).</p> <p>English and te reo Māori are the two most common languages of instruction in the NZ education system. There is currently no requirement nor option to demonstrate competency in a Pacific language to become a NZ registered teacher, including for those who intend to teach in Pacific language settings. (Currently, around 110 early learning settings and 30 schools provide Pacific bilingual/immersion education in NZ).</p> <p>The purpose of the Teaching Council, as described in the Education and Training Act 2020, is to regulate teaching in English- and Māori-medium settings. However, the impending Education and Training Amendment Bill (No 2) will clarify that the purpose of the Council <u>is to regulate teaching in all language settings</u>.</p>
<p><b>Language competency requirements sometimes act as a barrier to speakers of Pacific languages</b></p>	<p>Current language competency requirements sometimes act as a barrier to speakers of Pacific languages who want to enter NZ ITE or become NZ registered teachers. Barriers associated with these requirements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limited recognition of Pacific schooling or tertiary qualifications as proof of language competency requirements,</li> <li>• cost of English language competency tests, and</li> <li>• English language competency requirements preventing Pacific people entering NZ ITE programmes.</li> </ul> <p>Pacific people who want to enter ITE or are seeking NZ teacher registration may have difficulty providing the necessary evidence of language competency to support their application. This may particularly be the case for applicants from Pacific countries, but some people working in NZ Pacific language settings may also face these difficulties.</p> <p><i>(Note that applicants seeking teacher registration also need a teaching qualification at NZQF Level 7 or above. If their teaching qualification does not meet this requirement, they will have to complete an additional qualification to gain registration)</i></p>
<p><b>This A3 outlines a joint work programme to address the above issues</b></p>	<p>This A3 outlines work to be undertaken by the Ministry of Education and the Teaching Council (with support from NZQA and MPP), to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support speakers of Pacific languages to meet English language competency requirements so they can enter ITE and gain teacher registration (shorter-term work), and</li> <li>• ensure language competency requirements are appropriate for teachers in Pacific bilingual/immersion education (medium to longer-term work).</li> </ul> <p><i>(Note that this joint work programme is part of a wider cross-agency work programme to support Pacific education, including work to grow and strengthen Pacific bilingual and immersion education pathways, and work to implement the Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020-2030)</i></p>



Annex 1: Work programme: Language Competency Requirements for Speakers of Pacific Languages Wanting to Become NZ Registered Teachers

To address these barriers...	between now and March 2022, we will...	and between March and July 2022, we will... <i>Sandra Tok / Tonga</i>	and after July 2022, we will...
for speakers of Pacific languages who want to do NZ ITE...	Confirm what evidence of language competency different tertiary providers require for entry into, and completion of NZ ITE (MoE, TC).	Explore expanding evidence of language competency (such as schooling completed in Pacific Realm countries - the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau) when considering discretionary requests for entry into ITE (TC, NZQA).	Explore options for a field-based ITE programme in early learning Pacific language settings (MoE, TC).
	Promote the 2019 changes to the Council's language policy, allowing ITE applicants to use tests other than IELTS to demonstrate English competency (TC).	Develop a pilot programme of personalised support (eg language test fees, access to bridging programmes, English language/study skills) for some current unregistered Pacific teachers who want to complete NZ ITE and gain registration (MoE, TC).	Expand pilot programme of personalised support (eg language test fees, access to bridging programmes, English language/study skills) for some current unregistered Pacific teachers who want to complete NZ ITE and gain registration (MoE, TC) [Funding dependant].
and become a NZ registered teacher...	Work with SAASIA and other groups to assess how many of their unregistered Pacific teaching workforce may want to gain registration (MoE, TC). <i>PEC?</i>	Explore expanding evidence of language competency (such as holding a Pacific-based ITE qualification) when considering discretionary requests for teacher registration (TC).	
	Gather data on past applications from Pacific peoples for entry into NZ ITE or teacher registration in relation to meeting language competency requirements, and on recognition of Pacific-based ITE qualifications (MoE, TC, NZQA).	Budget 2022 initiatives to gain and retain Pacific bilingual/immersion teacher workforce (MoE) [Budget funding dependant, Budget sensitive].	
and to support quality teaching in Pacific language settings...	Begin policy work on adding one or more Pacific languages (as options alongside te reo Māori and English) to language competency requirements for entry into ITE and NZ teacher registration (including considering options such as limited scopes of practice, how to assess Pacific language competency, respective level of English competency etc) (MoE, TC, NZQA).	Amend legislation to clarify that the Council's purpose is to regulate teaching in all language settings, including Pacific languages (MoE, TC).	Complete policy work on adding one or more Pacific languages to language competency requirements for entry into ITE and NZ teacher registration (once legislation comes into effect, clarifying the Council's purpose is to regulate teaching in all languages of instruction, MoE, TC, NZQA).
	<i>Realise Summer + Tonga</i>	Develop Cabinet paper on strategic direction of Pacific bilingual and immersion education in NZ education system (MoE: Timeframe of Cabinet paper TBC, further advice to follow, METIS 1269004 refers).	
		Begin wider work on supporting and growing the Pacific bilingual and immersion workforce, as part of work to grow Pacific bilingual pathways (details to be confirmed as wider work programme progresses) (TC, MoE).	Complete wider work on supporting and growing the Pacific bilingual and immersion teaching workforce (TC, MoE).