



Briefing Note: Overseas ECE teachers unable to gain registration

To:	Minister Hipkins		
Date:	29 June 2021	Priority:	Medium
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1263148
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Report

You have asked for information on why some Australian trained early childhood education (ECE) teachers are unable to be registered as teachers in New Zealand. This paper provides that information.

Agree that this Briefing will be proactively released.

☒ **Agree** / ☐ **Disagree**

John Brooker
Group Manager
Education System Policy

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Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

3/7/21

Registration for overseas teachers with ECE qualifications

1. The Teaching Council (the Council) is an independent statutory body with the power to set registration requirements for teachers.
2. Overseas trained ECE teachers must show that they are satisfactorily trained to teach in New Zealand as part of meeting registration requirements. There are three ways they can satisfy this requirement:
 - a. The person holds a current provisional or full certificate to teach in Australia. As per the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Agreement (TTMRA) 1997 the Council will register these teachers; or
 - b. The person has a teaching qualification that is the equivalent of a Level 7 or above on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF); or
 - c. A discretionary pathway, which applies to people who do not meet the core knowledge requirements of an Initial Teacher Education (ITE) qualification but who can demonstrate appropriate qualifications at level 7 for teaching in the public education system in their previous country. The Council then considers a range of factors as a package to determine whether the person can be granted registration as an exception to policy. The factors include qualifications, teaching experience and professional development.

People with Australian early learning qualifications unable to get registration in New Zealand

3. In Australia, to work in an ECE centre, educators must hold or be actively working towards an approved ECE qualification. These qualifications are at Certificate III (equivalent to NZQF level 3), diploma (equivalent to NZQF level 5) and bachelor (equivalent to NZQF level 7) levels.
4. However, to hold provisional or full registration as an early childhood teacher with the Australian equivalents of the Council, the qualification generally needs to be at a bachelor level or above. Most states require early childhood teachers to be registered, therefore these people are covered under the TTMRA for registration in New Zealand.
5. The Council has received several enquiries from people with Australian qualifications seeking registration. The Council has informed them that they are unlikely to meet registration requirements as they do not meet requirement a. or b. above, nor would a discretionary pathway be appropriate as most of this group's qualifications are at NZQF Level 3 or 5, which is well below the Level 7 required for registration. These people would likely hold Australian Certificate III or diploma level qualifications.
6. There are teacher certification requirements for teacher-led, education and care services. Once an Australian ECE qualified teacher is registered and certificated with the Council, they can count as a certificated teacher for funding purposes. Educators with level 3-5 qualifications do not count as certificated teachers.

Additional support to upgrade qualifications is not recommended

7. The Council have advised that there are existing programmes by which an Australian-trained teacher can upgrade to meet the New Zealand requirements, but this requires financial and time commitments from these teachers.

8. There are many New Zealand ECE qualifications at around the same level as the Australian level 3 and 5 qualifications. People with these qualifications also cannot get registration in New Zealand without upgrading.
9. A person with level 3 to 5 ECE qualifications may be granted credit towards an NZQF level 7 qualification at a tertiary provider for any relevant studies, professional experience and training they may have had.

TeachNZ Scholarships

10. A possible mechanism to provide support for these people may be to help them to upgrade their qualifications, either through scholarships for people with level 3 to 5 ECE qualifications, or developing alternative pathways for them.
11. Currently, TeachNZ offers a range of Teacher Recruitment Scholarships for New Zealand students to gain ECE qualifications to increase the number of teachers in the ECE sector. There is a total of 465 scholarships offered by TeachNZ each year for ECE, primary and secondary sectors. Students seeking ECE qualifications can apply under the existing scholarships, though some are only for Māori and Pasifika students. For the most recent application round in 2021, around one in five scholarships were awarded to students studying towards ECE qualifications – around 45 scholarships.
12. The Ministry of Education also offers ECE Service Teacher Education Grants to support ECE providers to assist staff members to gain ECE qualifications that lead to Teacher Registration.

Work programme to strengthen initial teacher education (ITE)

13. You recently agreed to progress a work programme to strengthen the quality of ITE programmes [METIS 1259764 refers]. One of the key objectives of this work is enabling more diverse pathways into teaching.
14. This work will focus on developing supported pathways for those who have valuable cultural, language and/or subject knowledge that is in short supply in teaching but cannot access the traditional routes into teaching. There will be specific focus on supporting pathways for te reo Māori, Pacific language, and technology teachers.
15. The Australian educators with a level 3 or 5 Australian qualification are in a similar situation to people in New Zealand with equivalent NZQF qualifications. Therefore, we think it would be preferable to focus on supporting people in New Zealand to gain appropriate ITE qualifications for ECE, rather than develop a tailored pathway specifically for the Australian-trained teachers. For this reason, we don't see them as an appropriate addition to the ITE work programme.

Proactive Release

16. We recommend that this Briefing is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.