Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

STP/Trades Academy Programme Operational Policy and Guidelines

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New Zealand Government
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

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1. Purpose

This paper outlines operational policy relating to the delivery of Secondary-Tertiary Programmes. In particular the paper clarifies:

- The minimum expectations with regards to STP programme design/length;
- Funding distribution and FTE Tertiary/School splits;
- Student eligibility to participate in a STP; and
- Learning outcomes expectations.

This paper does not intend to be fully prescriptive, noting the Education and Training Act 2020 (Section 215 and Schedule 8) allows the recognised Lead Provider to define the methods of delivery, participants, funding split and educational awards offered. The Ministry encourages Lead Providers to align with the operational policy recommendations which follow. We expect on the most part, Lead Providers already align with the majority of the recommendations, which will ensure compliance with the Education and Training Act 2020 and requirements outlined within Funding/Outcome Agreements (held with either the MOE or TEC).

The document may also be useful for participating secondary schools, students, parents/whanau and other stakeholders to aid their understanding of STP delivery expectations, funding, outcomes and in particular, student eligibility.

2. Background

Trades Academies are an example of a secondary-tertiary programme (STP) and provide a broad range of learning opportunities for senior secondary students motivated by a trades career to ensure they stay engaged in education for longer.

To date the majority of STPs in operation are Trades Academies, although there is also a School of Secondary-Tertiary Studies, a other variations of the Trades Academy trading name. All operate according to the same STP rules since establishment in 2010. STPs will be closely monitored and evaluated to determine their effectiveness; this will inform any future commitment.

STPs are based on a partnership between schools, tertiary and industry organisations and will deliver:

- A coherent NCEA level 2 (or equivalent) qualification; and
- a programme which leads to a trades (vocational) related nationally transferrable tertiary qualification in Level 1,2 and 3

This operational policy document will be reviewed on an annual basis, with updates and changes released on a half-yearly basis as required (or if urgent, immediately).

3. STP Design and Minimum Expectations

High Level Principles

- Is an integrated learning programme, developed by the lead provider in collaboration with regional stakeholders, including schools, employers, tertiary providers etc.
- Is a quality programme that leads to students achieving worthwhile trades (vocational) related nationally transferrable tertiary qualification in Level 1,2 and 3 (the Ministry accepts a full New Zealand (NZ) tertiary qualification may not be feasible within a one-year STP course).
- Is standards based (unit/achievement), so that credits can contribute to NCEA (specifically L2).
- Students should have the opportunity to attain a Vocational Pathways endorsement in their programme of study.
- Is a coherent programme delivered by a range of providers able to offer specialist expertise and resources as co-ordinated by the Lead Provider.
- Integrates both the secondary tertiary components so that literacy and numeracy credits are embedded within the programme.
- Includes arrangements for student welfare and safety such as pastoral care, career guidance, and work experience.
- National education strategies and policy priorities (Strategies, policies and programmes - Ministry of Education) and the New Zealand Curriculum will apply.
- Whilst STP programmes are focussed on enabling NCEA L2 achievement, the Ministry accepts that returning Y13 students can be considered in NCEA L3 programmes (if resourcing allows) to ensure positive transitions.

Programme Minimum Expectations

- Integrated Learning Programme (as noted above) developed with participating stakeholders.
- The programme must deliver sufficient NCEA Level 2 credits to enable the student to successfully attain the NCEA Level 2 qualification upon completion of the course (this may be a multi-year course). The programme includes school based and tertiary based NCEA Level 2 credits.
- The programme will lead towards (or enable achievement) of a nationally transferrable tertiary qualification in Level 1/2/3 (i.e. NZ Certificate in a particular Trade).
- Based on a standard enrolment, it is agreed that the minimum weeks applied to a full time course would be 30 weeks, with most senior roll students expected to be at school for between 30 and 34 weeks[1].
- For full time courses delivered over 30 weeks, lead providers should endeavour to provide flexibility to students in the form of catch up classes to enable the completion of course credits (i.e. during the 4th term).
- Minimum of 25 hours per week study (across both secondary and tertiary based learning).
- A full time course (as per length/times above) will generate 1 FTE student/funded place.

[1] Where a student does not achieve NCEA L2 during the first year of study, the Ministry recommends that where possible, regular school operational grants (e.g. STAR) should be used to support the student completing any unfinished credits (as opposed to utilising a full year funded place the next year).

4. STP Funding Distribution

- Each funded place equates to 1 FTE – this is a full time place across a year (minimum 30 weeks, 25 hours per week).
- The Lead Provider, student and participating school must agree on the programme delivery model and as part of this, must also agree to the funding split based on days (or half days) spent in school or in tertiary learning. This split should be based on a full year proportion e.g. block course learning is allowed, but FTE rates should be determined across the full year. For example 5-6 weeks delivered as a block course, would equate to 25-30 tertiary learning days and approximately 0.2 FTE. The school would be expected to report 0.8 FTE across the full year, even if the block courses are limited to 1-2 terms of the calendar year. Total FTE must equal 1.
- A funded place cannot be split across multiple students, e.g. 1 place funding 2 x 0.2 FTE tertiary courses. This scenario would actually cause over-funding, as it would then generate 2 0.8 FTE places on the schooling side.
- Lead Providers will receive the tertiary component of the funding, which includes a trades top up for eligible programmes. The Lead Provider will also receive funding covering Pastoral Care and Co-ordination.
- Tertiary Lead Providers are funded by the Tertiary Education Commission on a monthly basis with a yearend wash up completed to account for any under-utilisation.
- School Lead Providers are funded by the Ministry on a quarterly basis[2], instalments being released in January, April, July and October. Wash-ups are completed for each instalment to account for actual students enrolled. This policy aligns with regular schooling operations and reporting requirements.
- Transport funding support will be funded by the Ministry for all Lead Providers. Applications will be processed during March-May each year, with approved funding released in up to two equal instalments. The first instalment will be released in April-June (subject to a timely submission of the Lead Providers application) and the second instalment in July-August.

[2] The Huarahi Trades Academy is funded in three segments as opposed to quarterly. Funding is released and washed up in January, May and September.

5. School and Student Eligibility

5.1 Participating Schools

Schedule 8 of the Education and Training Act 2020 defines eligibility for students entering into an STP. A student who is enrolled in any of the following (Schedule 8 Clause 8) may apply to an STP Lead Provider or Provider Group for his or her entry (typically via the enrolling school) into an STP programme:

- A secondary school
- A composite school[3]
- A charter school who have been approved and contracted under Section 212 of the Education and Training Act 2020 (not including primary schools)
- A private secondary school registered under Section 214 of the Education and Training Act 2020 (not including schools registered only as a primary school)
- A specialist school that is a relevant school within the meaning of Section 197 of the Education and Training Act 2020

Those students who are home schooled are not eligible to participate in an STP (see Student Eligibility section for further information).

As noted below around student eligibility, it is expected State and State-Integrated schools will be prioritised for access to programme funding (and programme leadership).

5.2 Student Eligibility

Overview

Students participating in STPs must be enrolled in a school as above, and also:

- be a senior secondary school student, i.e. in years 11-15[4]; and
- be aged 18 or under at the start of the calendar year. A student's right to enrol ends on 1 January after the student's 19th birthday, as defined in Section 33 of the Education and Training Act 2020. Adult students are not eligible to participate in an STP[5].
- be aged 20 or under at the start of the calendar year if the student is ORS funded (see detail below).

Students with Learning Support needs

If a student has learning support requirements and receives ORS funding, the student's right to enrol ends on 1 January after the student's 21st birthday as defined in Section 37 of the Education and Training Act 2020.

[3] A composite school includes (but is not limited to) Area Schools, the Correspondence School (Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu), a Designated Character School, Te kura kaupapa Māori, Teen Parent Units and Te Wharekura.
[4] Exceptions may be applied to Year 10 students, approval must be sought by the Ministry if a Lead Provider is considering enrolling students from Year 10.
[5] Exceptions may be applied to adult students who are completing the final year of their programme; approval must be sought by the Ministry if a Lead Provider is considering enrolling an adult student (i.e. a student aged 19 at the start of the year).

These students will be eligible to participate in an STP if aged 20 or under at the start of the calendar year. Students aged 19 or older (at the start of the calendar year) who are not ORS funded, will not be eligible.

Alternative Education and Other Schools with Notional Rolls

Those students enrolled in schools that have a notional roll (e.g., TPUs, Alternative Education, Activity Centres, Health Schools) can participate in STPs, in line with the eligibility rules above. Participating schools with notional rolls though will not receive any STP funding resource, rather they will continue to receive regular notional roll operational funding (with no reductions due to student STP participation). For guidance to support reporting of these students please refer to Supplementary School Roll Returns guidance – Youth Guarantee.

Home-schooled Students

Those students who are **home-schooled are not eligible** to participate (receive STP cash funding) in an STP. Home-schooled students are not defined as 'Full Time Students', with the education delivered by a parent or an unregistered PTE also not being a valid form of learning in which to generate funding as defined in Schedule 8 Clause 8 of the Education and Training Act 2020.

A home-schooled student would need to enrol at a secondary or composite (or another school type noted above) school to allow them to attend and generate relevant STP funding. Alternatively, as per the international student guidance below, other funding could be used to fund the tertiary component of the programme, although these students would not be officially recorded as STP funded students.

International Students

International students are eligible to participate in an STP, as per their right to enrol (i.e. visa requirements are met). If the international student is a fee paying student, they will not be entitled to utilise STP funding for costs associated with the course. Rather part of the international fee can be used to fund the tertiary component of the programme. Therefore these students would not be officially recorded as an STP funded students, but could complete the learning programme pending agreement between the tertiary provider and school.

If international students are not fee paying students, for example the student's parents are in New Zealand on a work or student visa, that student will (in most cases) be regarded as a domestic student for primary and secondary school[6]. The student will therefore not need to pay international fees. Hence, in this scenario the student will be eligible to utilise STP funding as their school would be funded via regular operation grants and staffing entitlements. It is noted, that based on current tertiary education policy this type of student would not be eligible for free tertiary education (i.e. via other YG funding streams).

The Education and Training Act 2020 Schedule 8 Clause 8 also notes that a Lead Provider (or Provider Group) must not approve the entry of an international student into a Secondary-Tertiary Programme if to do so would result in the provider excluding from entry to the

[6] Further information can be found at Dependent Child Resident Visa » Immigration New Zealand

programme, any domestic student who has applied for entry into the programme and is otherwise eligible to participate.

Private or Chartered Student vs. Public Student Priority

The following principles are provided as a recommendation to Lead Providers regarding private or chartered students and public-school students:

- All enrolled students (noting sections above) are eligible to participate in an STP.
- STP funded places should be allocated to those students where the Lead Provider, secondary school and parents/whanau agree the trades based learning programmes delivered by STPs will best benefit the student's needs.
- While STPs are open to all enrolled students in New Zealand, schools and/or Lead Providers may determine that priority learners or those at risk of disengaging from education should be given priority.
- STPs must be treated in the same way as other academic based learning programmes which seek to transition students into higher education. STPs provide an equivalent learning opportunity for those students who wish to pursue and achieve success in a vocational environment.
- Students from private or charter schools may enrol in a STP. Lead Providers will be expected to apply their best judgement as to whether a private or chartered school should be allocated funded places, over Public or Integrated Schools. It is important to note that the private or chartered school will not receive STP funding and their student subsidy for the student may also be reduced. A private school will also need to consider student fees when agreeing to participate in a STP.
- It is recommended that where private or chartered school students wish to participate in an STP programme that unfunded STP places be utilised, i.e. the funding arrangements are agreed and managed between the Lead Provider and the private or charter school (as with the international fee paying student, some of the private or wider fees received can be used to support the tertiary provision costs).

Student Participation in Multiple Programmes

Analysis of historic data has identified that each year a number of students are enrolled in more than one STP or are enrolled in more than one programme at the same STP.

The Ministry recommends:

- That STP places should be utilised by Lead Providers to ensure the greatest number of students have access to vocational learning programmes, in particular those priority learners where the school or Lead Provider identifies a high risk of disengaging from education.
- Where there is a particular benefit to a student from participation in multiple STP programmes, the Ministry will approve these students on a case by case basis.
- Lead Providers are expected to engage with participating schools (who must disclose that a student is already enrolled in an STP) to confirm if any enrolling students from the school are enrolled in another STP programme.
- Schools should be aware that students participating in more than one programme will mean their STP funding will reduce accordingly (0.2 FTE per day).

Lead Providers should note that for the student's second enrolled programme, the Pastoral Care and Co-ordination Funding will be subject to Ministry approval. The Lead Provider will need to provide justifications as to why the student should generate a further Pastoral Care and Co-ordination fund (this would only be considered in special circumstances).

In the event a student enrols in a second programme within the same STP/Trades Academy, the Lead Providers Funding Agreement can be varied to account for the higher tertiary FTE rate applicable. For example, as opposed to a student using two 0.2 FTE places, the agreement can be varied to account for the student as 0.4 FTE (ensuring a further funded place can be used for another student).

6. Operational Delivery Considerations

Student Participation in Gateway/STAR Programmes

Students enrolled in an STP may participate in a Gateway programme at the same time. The Ministry recommends though that the Gateway programme complements the chosen STP/Trades Academy programme ensuring a fully integrated learning programme.

STAR funding is also untagged so can be used at the discretion of the school (hence Trades Academy/STP students can also utilise this funding if necessary – we would expect this to be unlikely given the higher cash rate received per STP student).

Support for Students with Learning Support Needs

Any student receiving funded Learning Supports in school, for example via ORS, is expected to receive the same support services off-site at the tertiary provider campus. As this support is funded by the MOE it is expected the school should endeavour to provide these services in agreement with the tertiary provider and/or Lead Provider. Support may also be provided via the MOE local office.

This support can include, specialist teaching, teacher aide or other specialist learning components.

Any Reader/Writer support approved via the Student Assessment Conditions (via NZQA) should also be made available to the student for any assessment completed off-site at the tertiary provider campus.

Transport funding support is offered to all students, and will support higher costs to ensure access for those students who may have greater needs (for example, supporting individual transport costs).

Programme Costs

Secondary-Tertiary Programmes (Trades Academies) are a fees free programme, and hence at a high level all programmes should be fully free to the participating student. The Ministry's recommended approach when dealing with programme costs is as follows:

- For either capitalised or un-capitalised expenditure, the cost should be supported from the STP/Trades Academy (or Gateway/STAR) funding received (General Teaching and Learning/Trades Top-Up).

- Any capitalised costs, i.e. which create an asset for the tertiary or other organisation, **must be met from the STP funding provided to the tertiary/secondary organisation** (as agreed between the parties involved – but generally should be funded by the organisation capitalising the goods)

    - Examples could include, health and safety equipment, tools/machinery, outdoor equipment (adventure tourism – kayaks/bikes etc.), hospitality programme uniforms, hairdressing equipment, wet weather clothing (jackets)

- Any additional costs, i.e. which don't create an asset and could be retained by the student, **should also be met from the STP funding provided to the tertiary/secondary organisation although this would be at the discretion of the parties involved**. STP/Trades Academy funding is provided at a significantly higher rate than regular operational funding and staffing entitlements, i.e. each trades (programme) based student generates pastoral care and co-ordination, General Teaching and Learning and Trades Top-Ups. We would expect there would be some excess funding (for most schools/tertiary providers) from the total funding available per student to cover the relatively small costs of items such as those below:

    - Examples could include wet weather clothing (these could though be capitalised – decision of the tertiary provider/school), gumboots, course accessories

7. Learning Outcome Requirements

- **A** - Ensure student **achievement** of NCEA Level 2 and a programme which may lead to the attainment of a nationally transferrable tertiary qualification in Level 1/2/3

  Lead Provider Performance Requirements:
  - *At least 80% of all students enrolled in an STP programme will achieve a minimum of NCEA L2*
  - *All students in the programme will attain 80% of programme specific credit*

- **R** – Increased **retention** of students in education

  Lead Provider Performance Requirements:
  - *Of those students enrolled in multi-year programmes, at least 60% will remain in the programme for the next year*
  - *All students in the programme will have an attendance rate across the whole programme of at least 80%*

- **T** - Ensure successful **transitions** into further education or employment (i.e. apprenticeships)

  Lead Provider Performance Requirement:
  - *At least 60% of all students enrolled in the programme are either retained in secondary education or progress to further education or employment*

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