



Consultation on proposed changes to the “Language competency for teaching in Aotearoa New Zealand” policy

Summary Document

April 2024

What we want to achieve

We know that there is a shortage of registered kaiako | teachers who are speakers of Pacific languages. It's important that children and young people have kaiako | teachers who understand their language, culture and identity and that these kaiako | teachers are respected and hold mana for the value they bring to the profession. These kaiako | teachers need to have English language capability in addition to their Pacific language. However, one of the areas identified as a barrier to increasing the number of Pacific language kaiako | teachers are the Teaching Council's current language competency requirements. So, we have developed recommendations to change these, and we'd like your feedback on them.

Recommendation 1: Introducing an indigenous Pacific languages pathway

For entry into Initial Teacher Education: Adding an indigenous Pacific language competency (PLC) pathway, with:

- an evidence requirement for indigenous Pacific language competency, and
- no additional Teaching Council evidence requirement for English language competency.

While this framework is developed, the Council's English Language Competency requirement for entry into Initial Teacher Education could be amended for applicants who are speakers of indigenous Pacific languages, so that it is set at the same level for general academic entry.

Rationale: Providing an additional pathway for entry into Initial Teacher Education (ITE) sends a strong signal about the value of Pacific identities, languages, and culture. A new pathway would recognise the high level of competence in Pacific languages and culture that are needed for bilingual/immersion settings. The Council already has a similar pathway in place for speakers of te reo Māori.

Removing the Council's current English language competency requirement addresses concerns that the level of English language competence currently required is a barrier for recruiting speakers of Pacific languages into bilingual/immersion settings. The need for a good command of English for academic study is supported by the need to meet academic entry requirements for English.

Other considerations: While this pathway highlights the value of indigenous Pacific languages within our education system, all teaching in our tertiary education institutions, other than Māori medium settings, uses English as the medium of instruction. This means:

- all applicants for academic programmes still need to meet each institution's general academic entry requirements, including English language competency requirements.
- general academic entry requirements are set at a slightly lower level than the Council's current English language requirements - so an applicant will still need enough English language for academic study, even if they choose the indigenous Pacific language competency (PLC) pathway.

- developing criteria for demonstrating Pacific language competency may mean a delay in being able to implement this pathway.

For teacher registration or an authority to teach: Adding an indigenous Pacific language competency pathway for teacher registration or for issuing a Tūranga Whakaako Whai-herenga | Limited Authority to Teach (LAT) with:

- an evidence requirement for indigenous Pacific language competency, and
- no additional evidence requirement for English language competency.

Rationale: Providing an indigenous PLC pathway for teacher registration or a LAT sends a strong signal about the value of Pacific identities, languages, and culture. A new pathway would recognise the high level of competence in Pacific languages and culture that are needed for bilingual/immersion settings. The Council already has a similar pathway in place for speakers of te reo Māori.

In addition, teacher registration applicants will already hold a teaching qualification at level seven, or above, which will likely have been taught with English as the medium of instruction. This means the applicant will have a good command of English for a teaching role.

To meet registration requirements, the applicant will also need:

- evidence they have completed one of the NZQA pre-approved teaching qualifications at level 7, or
- provide other evidence from an NZQA International Qualifications Assessment.

Currently in the Pacific region, there are two pre-approved teaching qualifications delivered by the University of the South Pacific (USP). The two USP teaching qualifications use English as the medium of instruction.

Other considerations: Developing criteria for demonstrating Pacific language competency may mean a delay in being able to implement this pathway.

Recommendation 2: Expanding English language evidence criteria

This change would apply to any applicant from the Pacific who is applying for entry into ITE, for teacher registration or a LAT using the English language competency pathway.

For entry into ITE: Expand evidence for demonstrating English language competency to include:

- a. all primary and at least three years secondary schooling OR six years secondary schooling and at least two years tertiary education completed with English as the main medium of instruction while living in Tokelau, Niue, Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Rotuma, Fiji or Kiribati.
- b. If the applicant is unable to provide these evidence options, the other options in the language competency policy would apply, including taking one of a range of available language tests.

For teacher registration or a LAT: Expand evidence for demonstrating English language competency to include:

- a. all primary and at least three years secondary schooling OR six years secondary schooling and at least two years tertiary education completed with English as the main medium of instruction while living in Tokelau, Niue, Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Rotuma, Fiji or Kiribati.
- b. If the applicant is unable to provide these evidence options, the other options in the language competency policy would apply, including taking one of a range of available language tests.

Rationale: Most Pacific countries use English as the main medium of instruction or as part of a structured bilingual approach to teaching and learning. Therefore, it is appropriate for schooling and tertiary study to be included as evidence of English language competency for any applicant from the Pacific, where the evidence criteria can be met.

To meet teacher registration requirements, the applicant will also need:

- evidence they have completed one of the approved teaching qualifications from the USP as - these programmes are taught using English as the medium of instruction, or
- another teaching qualification at level seven or above, on the NZQA pre-approved teaching qualification list, or approved as comparable to a level 7 New Zealand ITE qualification.

Other considerations: The Council could undertake an attestation process with each Pacific country, to confirm English as the medium of instruction for schooling and tertiary.

How would the new pathways work?

Scenario One:	Scenario Two:	Scenario Three:	Scenario Four:
ITE applicants choosing the PLC pathway needn't meet Teaching Council English language competency requirements but must meet their tertiary education institution's general admission requirements.	A teacher from the Pacific choosing the PLC pathway needn't meet Teaching Council English language competency requirements but must have a level seven (or above) teaching qualification (pre-approved USP qualifications are taught in English).	An ITE applicant schooled in the Pacific can provide evidence of this instead of needing to complete language testing . Language testing would only be necessary if evidence for schooling or tertiary study in the Pacific can't be provided.	For an applicant for teacher registration from the Pacific - a teaching qualification from the USP serves as evidence of English language competency.

How to have your say

The Council welcomes feedback from all kaiako | teachers, professional leaders, ITE providers, peak bodies, and other stakeholders, including members of the public, ECE, and kura or school communities, who may be interested in or potentially affected by the proposed policy changes. The deadline for feedback is **Friday 10 May 2024**.

You can submit your views on the proposals via a survey on our website. However, you can also make a written and/or oral submission.

If you wish to provide more detailed feedback rather than responding to the survey, please send written comments to LangCompConsult2024@teachingcouncil.nz

What we will do with your feedback

The Council will analyse and consider your feedback before making decisions on amendments to the policy.

An analysis of the submissions will be published. The Council is required to consider any request to release the submissions under the Official Information Act (OIA). Any submissions released under the OIA will be anonymised. You cannot veto the release of your submission under the OIA, but you can let us know if there are specific reasons why you would like your feedback to remain confidential, and we will consider those reasons before deciding on any OIA request that is received.