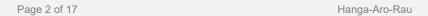


Employer Toolkit Food & Beverage Sector

Supporting industry to engage confidently with the vocational education system

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About the Industry Employer Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to help industry better understand and navigate New Zealand's vocational education system, including NZQA qualifications, training options, and support services. Whether you're an employer, manager, or industry leader, this resource will guide you through key information from qualifications and skill standards to workforce initiatives, so you can make informed decisions and support successful career pathways in your sector.

List of acronyms

| Acronyms | Interpretation |
|----------|--------------------------------------|
| F&B | Food and Beverage Industry |
| ISB | Industry Skills Board |
| MPI | Ministry for Primary Industries |
| NIAG | National Industry Advisory Group |
| NZQA | New Zealand Qualifications Authority |
| NZQF | New Zealand Qualifications Framework |
| OMARs | Overseas Market Access Requirements |
| PTE | Private Training Establishment |
| TEC | Tertiary Education Commission |
| VET | Vocational Education and Training |
| WDCs | Workforce Development Councils |

Snapshot of what industry want to know

Select the box below to learn more

Qualification Information
NZQA standards &
credentials

How to navigate the New Zealand qualification framework with confidence. Understand unit standards, skill standards, microcredentials, and qualification development processes.

Career and Learning
Pathways
Skills mapping & progression

Supporting resources to explore career progression routes, transferable skills frameworks, and sector-specific qualification mapping for the F&B industry.

Inclusive Workforce
Development
Workplace cultural capability
support

How to build strong workplace
cultures with growing
workforces, resources to
attraction and retention
strategies, and community
engagement tools.

Available Funding Support
Government grants & support
schemes

Information businesses need to know about government funding, apprenticeship support, and financial assistance for workforce development initiatives.

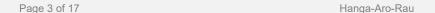
What's in place now and what's evolving

Understanding Workforce Development Councils (WDCs)

Workforce Development Councils are legislative **standard-setting bodies*** that set standards for vocational training in Aotearoa. The WDCs are your industry voice, working in partnership with industry, iwi and education providers to ensure learners are gaining the right capabilities to thrive in your workplaces.

Explore the link below to see how we're legislatively empowered to shape training:

Education and Training Act 2020 No 38 (as at 01 July 2025), Public Act 366 Functions of workforce development councils – New Zealand Legislation



Stay informed on changes to the vocational education system

Keep up with the latest updates on the evolving vocational education and training (VET) system, relating to the transition of standard-setting responsibilities from Workforce Development Councils to new Industry Skills Boards (ISBs). Here are supporting links to help you understand the coming changes:

- Industry Skills Boards | Tertiary Education Commission
 This link will take you to the proposed content for ISB Orders in Council and provides an overview information about the ISBs
- Proposed industry coverage for Industry Skills Boards
 This link sets out the proposed industry ISB coverage

Overview of the ISBs' coverage

The agreed ISBs will have the following broad coverage areas:

| Industry Skills Board | Example sectors within industry coverage |
|--|--|
| Automotive, transport and logistics | Automotive mechanics, commercial road transport, logistics, maritime |
| Construction and specialist trades | Carpentry, flooring, plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying, roofing, scaffolding |
| Food and fibre (including aquaculture) | Agriculture, forestry, horticulture, aquaculture |
| Health and community | Aged care, community health and support, funeral services |
| Infrastructure | Electrical supply, road construction, telecommunications, water infrastructure, energy, mining, quarrying |
| Manufacturing and engineering | Food and beverage manufacturing, mechanical engineering, textiles, rail operations, wood manufacturing, composites |
| Services | Business services, creative arts, hairdressing and barbering, hospitality, recreation, retail, tourism |
| Electrotechnology and information technology | Electrotechnology, electronics, communications technology, computing |

Visit the Tertiary Education Commission's website for more information.

Source: Industry Skills Boards | Tertiary Education Commission

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^{*}Standard-setting-bodies lead the development of industry qualifications; they will set industry standards and assess training provision against these industry standards.

Qualification information

Understanding the key differences in the makeup of a qualification

NZQA qualifications

Nationally recognised credentials that confirm a person has achieved specific skills and knowledge, listed on the NZ Qualifications Framework (NZQF).

Unit standards

Smaller components of learning that focus on specific skills or knowledge. Learners can complete several of these to work towards a full qualification.

Skill standards

Outcomes-based statements that describe what a learner should know or do, aligned with real job roles. Developed with input from industry (employers), not the learner, to ensure they match current workplace needs.

Micro-credentials

Short, focused learning packages that certify a specific set of skills or knowledge. Although they're stand-alone awards, some micro-credentials may also form part of a programme that leads to a qualification.

New development of standards & qualifications

This refers to the creation of unit standards, skill standards, or qualifications to meet industry needs or reflect new practices.

Qualification review

A process where qualifications and their related standards are reviewed together to ensure they are still relevant, useful, and aligned with current industry practice. NZQA set the expectation for standards and qualifications to undergo a review process every 3-5 years facilitated by the standard setting body.

Moderation

A quality assurance process to ensure assessments are fair, consistent, and meet national standards.

Standard-setting body

The responsibility for developing, maintaining, and reviewing qualifications and standards to make sure they reflect industry needs and are nationally consistent.

Provider

A provider is any organisation that is officially approved to deliver education and training and assess learners against recognised standards, for example polytechnics and institutes of technology, private training establishments, Wānanga and workplace training providers (only businesses approved to deliver on-job training and assessment).



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Understanding 'review through to delivery' process of qualifications:

| | Process: | Led by: |
|---------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Step 1. | Identify industry need | Standard-setting body |
| Step 2. | Develop qualification/standard | Standard-setting body |
| Step 3. | Develop programmes | Providers but endorsed |
| | | by the standard-setting |
| | | body |
| Step 4. | Recruit apprentices/learners | Industry to be enrolled by |
| | | providers |
| Step 5. | Deliver programmes | Industry/providers, and |
| | | standard-setting body |
| | | moderate results |
| Step 6. | Award qualification | Provider |

Ways you can actively contribute to this process



Identify skills your workers need and share this information with standard-setting body



Actively engage with standardsetting body to ensure industry representation is visible and heard



Get involved with qualification development and review cycles led by the standard-setting body



Share technical expertise to the standard-setting body so learning contents are fit-for-purpose

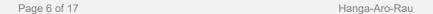
Career and learning pathways

Food & Beverage

In the Food & Beverage industry, formal qualifications help ensure your workforce understands the regulatory standards set for the industry by Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), the Food Safety Authority (FSA), and Overseas Market Access Requirements (OMARs): things essential for export, market access, and compliance. Career pathways offer opportunities for your workforce to grow their skills, increase ways to attract and retain, while supporting them progress to higher paid roles. Nationally recognised training also supports productivity, consistency, and business credibility, giving you confidence that your team has the right skills to deliver quality and meet industry expectations.

Stories from industry employers on building skilled teams

Building workforce capability isn't just good practice, it's good business. Māori and Pacific are young and growing in population. Industries that embrace cultural understanding, inclusive workplaces, and tailored training strengthen their retention, boost engagement, and gain a competitive edge.





Māori values driving the success of Kiwi Kai

"As Māori we are very natural with tikanga, kaitiakitanga, rangatiratanga – and continually excited to pass down what we know to our employees, manaaki especially," says Reni Wereta-Gargiulo (Ngati Ruanui, Nga Rauru Kitahi, Te Atiawa), Owner of Kiwi Kai Nelson. "We're really important to the chain of employment. We bring with us our values, our intelligence, and our joy, as well as the wisdom of those who came before us."

Māori values driving the success of Kiwi Kai - Hanga Aro Rau



Growing the Pacific workforce and its potential

A strong vocational education and training system must support Pacific workers with robust training and progression pathways, to ensure we can harness the significant opportunity they present to fill increasing skill and workforce shortages. Hamilton-based Prolife Foods has been successfully supplying high-quality dried and bulk food goods for 40 years with passion, integrity and accountability. Their huge international success has been built on a flexible, familial work environment that includes a significant proportion of Pacific workers.

Part one: Growing the Pacific workforce and its potential Part two: Growing the Pacific workforce and its potential

Proof that qualifications build careers

Read incredible case studies conducted by Food & Fibre CoVE. From the perspectives of a school leaver to a leading hand in organic farming, and a mid-career professional in project management looking for a change in his passion for animal care, leading them into shepherding. These unique experiences show that when employers provide meaningful training, support and recognition, staff not only develop professionally – they are more likely to stay and thrive. This directly supports productivity, retention and stronger talent pipeline.

Click here to read about the case study

- Case study one: Jane, organic farming school leaver doing an apprenticeship
- Case study two: David, career changer

Why these matter for industry

Diverse pathways: Whether starting from school or switching careers mid-life, tailored training pathways can successfully develop new workforce entrants.

Holistic support: Combining formal qualifications with mentorship, practical learning, and financial assistance yields stronger outcomes.

Employer role: Active involvement from funding and infrastructure to flexibility and recognition, this can significantly influence employee progression and retention.

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Explore career and learning pathways support tools

Good Employer Guide

This guide supports employers across Aotearoa New Zealand to tackle urgent talent shortages in industries like manufacturing, engineering, and logistics. It provides practical, research-based strategies for engaging with schools and communities, helping businesses build skilled, work-ready talent while strengthening their workforce pipeline, reputation, and diversity.

View the Good Employer Guide here or see Appendix 1.

Food & Beverage qualification mapping

The qualification mapping presents the stepping stones to increase your level expertise in Food & Beverage manufacturing and more broadly, explore the cross-sector pathways mapping to see how you can obtain other skills. Understanding the NZQF levels (2–6) helps your workforce see how skills and knowledge progressively build in each qualification, creating confidence and opportunities for industry.

View the Food & Beverage manufacturing qualification pathways mapping here or see Appendix 2, and view the cross-sector pathways mapping here or see Appendix 3.





Tahatū Career Navigator

Explore the <u>Tahatū Career Navigator</u>, an innovative, interactive careers planning platform developed by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). This will support your workforce to navigate informed career decisions with confidence, and has tailored support for Māori, Pacific and disabled communities.

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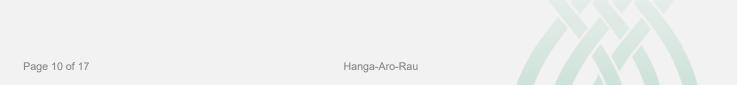
Resources of support to harness experience, attract new talent, and strengthen your workforce

| Focus group | Resource | Practice highlights | Click on the picture to open the link |
|--------------------|---|---|--|
| Disabled | Unlocking the potential of the disabled workforce: Strategies to inform redesign of the vocational education and training system and its link to employment support and recruitment, Hanga-Aro-Rau | This white paper report outlines how to build a more inclusive and future-focused vocational education system for the manufacturing, engineering, and logistics sectors. It highlights the need to disabled learners, improve data and outcomes, embed inclusive teaching, and support system-wide collaboration. | The second secon |
| Pacific Peoples | Redesigning the vocational education and training system to unlock the potential of Pacific Peoples through workforce development: Strategies to inform vocational training design, Hanga-Aro-Rau | This white paper supports industry to grow a skilled Pacific workforce by providing practical guidance to redesign vocational education. It focuses on inclusion, future-ready skills, and transitioning to Industry Skills Boards to help address sector-wide skill shortages. | Program in the Control of Control |
| Māori | Redesigning the vocational education and training system to unlock the potential of Māori and the Māori economy through workforce development: Eight strategies to inform vocational training design, Hanga-Aro-Rau | This white paper outlines how vocational education can better support Māori success and the Māori economy. It provides industry with practical, co-designed strategies like Māori-led leadership, stronger pathways, and Te Tiriti partnerships, to grow a skilled Māori workforce and boost economic resilience. | A forgo do cido a Sundanina (Supramorpor) (pagamagne) |
| Young people | Creating a youth-friendly workplace: A guide for employers, REAP | This guide from Ako Aotearoa explores how employers can create environments where young people feel supported, included, and motivated to succeed in the workplace. It draws on employer and youth perspectives to outline effective practices and strategies. | Creating a youth-friendly workplace A guide for employers REAP **STEAD AND THE PROPERTY OF T |

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| Young people | Employer Engagement Toolkit, Ministry of Education | This toolkit provides information, resources, and examples to help educators build relationships and partnerships with employers that prepare young people for the world of work. | Employer Engagement Toolkit Bringing young people and employers together © DISCOYER © EXPLORE © CONNECT |
|---------------------|--|---|--|
| Young people | Employers' Toolkit: Engaging with young people, Careers NZ | This toolkit is a practical guide designed to help employers engage effectively with young people and streamline youth recruitment. It includes recruiting checklists, interview templates, health-and-safety guides, and strategies to connect industry and education. | Employers Toolkit: Engaging with young people. |
| Ageing workforce | Older workers employment toolkit | The Older workers employment toolkit is designed to help businesses attract, develop, and retain older employees. It offers tools and advice tailored for lifting workplace diversity and capability. | Older workers employment toolkit As the population ages and more people work laive in this, was calantive workers will include more people age one risk. That toolkin till halp up biles, develop, and resals ofter orders. It includes workers and resals ofter orders. It includes workers and exist ofter orders. It is included to the control ofter orders. It is not to the control ofter orders. It i |
| Ageing workforce | Better Work in Later Life website | Better Work in Later Life offers evidence-based tools, insights, and best practices to help employers build an inclusive, age-friendly workplace and make the most of an ageing workforce. | Better Work in Later Life softene band recourse supporting slide people to engage in the workstern and for knownous to make the benefits of Antennas New Zealand's ageing population. |



| New staff | Your toolkit for supporting new staff, MITO | This toolkit offers a step-by- step guide to help you recruit, onboard, and support new staff, especially in industries where hiring isn't a daily task. It's designed to ease the process and increase retention. | YOUR TOOLKIT FOR SUPPORTING NEW STAFF mito William |
|------------------------------|--|---|---|
| All | The Food and Fibre Skills Framework Core Transferable Skills, Muka Tangata & Food and Fibre CoVE | This paper outlines examples of core transferable skills in the Food and Fibre Skills Framework, offering a flexible, industry-ready foundation for individuals, employers, and educators to build a skilled and empowered workforce. | The Food and Fibre Skills Framework Core Transferable Skills Skill Description, Reflection Scenarios and Resource Links |
| Māori Pacific Disabled | Under-served learners: The economic and wellbeing benefits of improving education outcomes, New Zealand Institute of Economic Research | This report highlights the economic wellbeing benefits of improving outcomes for underserved learners showing that better education access leads to higher productivity, workforce participation and social cohesion. | Under-served learners The economic and wellbeing benefits of improving education outcomes Still require to it flaudion |
| Disabled | Lead Toolkit: For employing disabled people | This toolkit offers practical guidance for business owners, leadership teams, HR professionals, and managers to recruit, retain, and empower disabled employees. | Dead Toolkit For employing disabled people |
| All | The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice Strategy and Action Plan – 2023 | The Code of Practice sets expectations for how providers support the wellbeing and success of learners. It requires a proactive, tailored approach that meets the needs of both domestic and international students, helping create safe, inclusive learning and work-based environments. | Achievement NZ Limited The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice Strategy and Action Plan - 2023 |

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Inclusive workforce development

Evolving industries are building inclusive, culturally safe environments by recognising and responding to the needs of their workforce including Pacific, Māori, and disabled communities. Helping employers create workplaces where everyone feels valued, supported, and able to thrive.

Support systems to support the development of workforce cultural capability

Check out Hanga-Aro-Rau's Māori and Pacific industry-focused workforce development plans:



Māori Workforce Development Plan 2025-2027, Mahere
Whanake Māori 2025-2027 and Lumana'i o Tangata Moana,
Pacific Peoples' Workforce Development Action Plan 20242029

These plans support employers with practical actions to:

- ✓ Attract and retain Māori and Pacific talent
- ✓ Create culturally safe and supportive workplaces
- ✓ Strengthen pathways into higher-skilled, better-paid roles
- ✓ Partner with iwi, hapū, and Pacific communities to grow regional and sector capability

Community and government initiatives

There is a range of local and national initiatives that support Māori, Pacific, and disabled communities into work and help attract talent into the industry. This includes non-accredited training from community organisations and resources to help employers build inclusive, supportive workplaces.

| Priority Group | Initiative | Practice Highlights | Image link |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| Māori Pacific | The Good Employer Matrix (GEM) | The Good Employer Matrix (GEM) helps employers attract Māori and Pacific talent, support upskilling and career progression, build inclusive workplaces, grow diverse leadership, embed equity practices, and use data to drive better workforce outcomes. | GEM GOOD MATRIX |

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| Pacific | Pacific Growth Services | Pacific Growth Services support industries to build culturally inclusive workplaces by providing tools, training, and guidance to strengthen understanding of Pacific values, improve engagement, and create better outcomes for Pacific employees and employers. | PACIFIC GROWTH. |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Immigrant | RSE workers' pastoral care (Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme) | Under the RSE scheme, horticulture employers must provide pastoral care to migrant workers, including arrival support, wellbeing services, and repatriation assistance at the end of their contract. | NEW ZEALAND IMMIGRATION |
| All | Te Wānanga Hoahoa Matauranga Aotearoa (NZ Curriculum Design Institute) wellbeing & pastoral care professional development | The New Zealand Career Development Institute offers workshops, and a professional community of practice focused on culturally responsive pastoral care and mental health first aid for industry professionals. These sessions also cover the New Pastoral Care Code legislation and facilitate peer support and shared learning. | NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM DESIGN INSTITUTE Te Wānanga Hoahoa Matauranga Aotearoa |
| Pacific Disabled Pacific | Le Va | Le Va can help businesses with large Pacific workforces build cultural competence for safer, more connected workplaces. Their Engaging Pasifika training supports better communication, trust, and wellbeing on the job. | LeVa |
| Māori | TIRA TŪ KOTAHI | Tira Māori supports businesses to uplift Māori staff through cultural capability, leadership, and wellbeing initiatives. Their resources help you build a more inclusive, values-led workplace where Māori thrive. | TIRA |

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| Pacific Cultural Capability Training, The Centre for Pacific Languages | The Centre for Pacific Languages helps businesses strengthen relationships with Pacific staff through language and culture training. Build cultural confidence, improve communication, and create a more inclusive, respectful workplace. | Centre for Pacific Languages |
|--|---|------------------------------|
|--|---|------------------------------|

Available funding support

Understanding information and support available for industry including government subsidies, apprenticeship funding, and targeted support for developing your team. Whether you're hiring, upskilling, or supporting priority groups – discover how funding can reduce costs and build capability in your business.

What does the government fund?

The government fund a wide range of vocational education and training initiatives to help employers grow a skilled workforce. It varies across the following:

- Subsided training programmes
- · Apprenticeships and managed apprenticeships
- Learner and support services
- Wage subsidies and targeted funding for hiring underrepresented groups*
- On-job assessment and moderation support

Understanding TEC funding

Advice to TEC

The Tertiary Education Commission is the funding body for the vocational education system. They fund Tertiary Education Organisations and providers. The WDCs currently provide ongoing advice to the TEC, advocating on behalf of industry. The advice is based on the skills and training needs of industries and that advice helps TEC make decisions on funding and programme development. However, TEC's investment decisions consider multiple factors and that the TEC advice we provide is just one of those sources. The types of advice WDCs provide to TEC are:

- 'Give effect' advice about qualifications on the framework that need funding to address skills gaps
- 'Have regard' advice to support improvement of performance in vocational education
- Career system advice to ensure our industries and learners are represented in the system that underpin a sustainable workforce
- Policy advice on broader settings that impact vocational education and training.

How does your input influence TEC decisions?

Your input through engagement with the WDCs on skill needs for your workforce plays a crucial role. The WDCs want to ensure industry voice is reflected in the advice provided to TEC which is a considered factor in their investment decisions.

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Government support systems that can support your business

Schemes to support your business

| Initiative | Target Group | Benefits | External link |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|
| Flexi-wage subsidy | New hires needing upskill | ✓ Wage subsidy to employers✓ Helps offset the cost of hiring and training | Flexi-wage subsidy - employer information - Work and Income |
| Mana in Mahi | At-risk jobseekers into long- term roles | ✓ Help employees gain formal qualifications ✓ Provide wage subsidy ✓ Pastoral care | Mana in Mahi - For employers - Work and Income |
| Apprenticeship Boost | First or second year apprentices | ✓ Monthly support payment for each apprentice ✓ Covers wages while apprentice learns | Apprenticeship Boost - Work and Income |
| Skills for Industry | Pre-work training seekers | ✓ Tailored training delivered to meet work requirements ✓ Entry-level training includes Health & Safety ✓ On-the-job training | Skills for Industry - Work and Income |

Scholarships to support your workforce

| Scholarship / programme | Information | Type of support | Link |
|--|---|---|--|
| Vocational short term training scholarship | Undertake a training course or a work placement – online or inclass training. | Full academic or short- term vocational training Award value varies | Vocational Short Term Training Scholarships MANAAKI Education New Zealand |
| Tulī Takes Flight scholarships | Available for both vocational and degree level study | Full academic support for Pacific \$31,500 award value | Tulī Takes Flight scholarships: Applications are open for 2025 - Ministry of Education |
| On Farm Support science scholarships (MPI) | Technical & advisory capacity in food production & supply chains | \$5,000 award value | MPI scholarships and awards NZ Government |
| Unitec Vocational Pathway scholarship | Further vocational study at Unitec – Diploma or Degree level. | \$2,000 award value | Vocational Pathway Scholarship Scholarships and Awards Unitec |
| Ngarimu VC and 28 th (Māori) | 9 scholarships available each year – 3 VET scholarships for study | Full academic support for Māori Award value varies | Ngarimu VC and 28th (Māori) Battalion Memorial |

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| Scholarship / programme | Information | Type of support | Link |
|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Battalion Memorial | minimum of 120 credits | | scholarships - Ministry of |
| scholarships | (non-degree) | | <u>Education</u> |

^{*}Underrepresented groups are Māori, Pacific people and people with disabilities are over-represented in under-served learners, and they are more likely to be male than female. (2021, NZIER. <u>Under-served learners</u>)



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Appendices

Appendix 1: Good Employer Guide.

https://hangaarorau.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Good-Employer-Guide-2025-Final.pdf

Appendix 2: Food and beverage qualification pathway map.

https://hangaarorau.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/FB-Pathways July25.pdf

Appendix 3: Cross-sector pathway mapping.

https://hangaarorau.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Common-Cross-Sector-Pathways.pdf

Acknowledgements

The *Employer Toolkit for Food and Beverage Sector* was developed as part of the Food and Beverage Workforce Development Plan. The idea for this toolkit came from the Food and Beverage NIAG, who highlighted the need for a practical resource to support employers.

Together, we have created a robust toolkit that provides both entry-level and general knowledge of the vocational education system in Aotearoa.

By bringing together what is currently available into one place, this resource will help strengthen the workforce from day one.

The guidance and contributions from the NIAG have been invaluable in shaping this toolkit. Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou.

