

Aide-Memoire: Tertiary Education Commission's support for jobseekers with disabilities and health conditions

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education
From:	Ian Lee, Deputy Chief Executive, Strategy and Design
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Purpose

- 1 This aide-memoire provides information on what the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) is currently doing to support jobseekers with disabilities or health conditions.
- 2 While this paper provides a high-level view of the process and programmes, it includes considerations by TEC to apply a disability lens on career/job seeker initiatives and what is being done through senior secondary school opportunities that support transitions like Gateway and Trades Academies.
- 3 We recommend that this aide-memoire is proactively released with Budget Sensitive information withheld.

Background on the Careers Strategy

- 4 Career development is a cornerstone to New Zealanders managing their learning and work choices for lifelong success. Such development has evolved and after the merger with Careers New Zealand, TEC has been ambitious in connecting New Zealanders aged 7-70 to the knowledge and skills they need to achieve lifelong success.

Accessibility on our websites, applications and digital products

- 5 TEC has specific content and articles on the careers.govt.nz website for people with disabilities, neurodiversity or health conditions who are seeking employment. Advice is also included for people who have gaps in their CV due to long-term illness, and links to disability sites to support people getting into careers.
- 6 We use Accessibility testing software on tec.govt.nz and careers.govt.nz to assess our websites. Our Accessibility expert and web-development team are making changes to improve accessibility. Online content is formatted to be screen-reader accessible - with guides to using short-cuts or 'access keys' to quickly navigate to the information required.
- 7 TEC consults with disability experts externally and internally to create content from research on disabled users. Editorial oversight of all content to ensure consistency with policy and

guidelines for accessibility and plain English. This includes making offline versions of resources available.

Inspiring the Future programme has an Inclusion and Diversity lead

- 8 Inspiring the Future (ITF) runs events in schools where volunteers from the world of work come to talk to and inspire students. It is focused on creating a positive impact on young people with disabilities, by utilising disabled and neurodiverse people in the creation of the programme (as user testers for the online platform and actively seeking volunteers for both in school and online events).
- 9 Form fields are included in the role-model sign-up process for people to share information about their disabilities. This enables students to see volunteers they relate to with disabilities and health conditions they may identify with as accomplished members of the community.
- 10 Accessibility functions are available for ease of access on the website and sign-up process on the platform. We are developing resources that are accessible and having key documents for role models translated into easy read and New Zealand sign language where appropriate.

Senior secondary school opportunities that support transitions

- 11 The Ministry of Education (MoE) offers a range of programmes for learners while they are still engaged in senior secondary schooling that support workplace and vocational learning, and the development of employability skills. We support this via Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR), Gateway and Secondary Tertiary Programmes (STP) such as Trades Academies.
- 12 Led by TEC, Gateway is designed to support senior school students' transition into the workforce by offering them access to structured workplace learning while at secondary school. STPs, more commonly known as Trades Academies, provide senior secondary students access to a broad range of trades or technology learning opportunities to ensure they stay engaged in education. The programme is delivered through partnerships developed between schools and tertiary education organisations.
- 13 These programmes are not specifically targeted to disabled people. Disabled learners are able to participate in these programmes alongside all other learners. For high-needs learners (such as Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) learners), teacher aides usually accompany students thus enabling students to participate alongside peers. Other supports may also be provided by the school, such as assistive technology.
- 14 The 2021 STP/Trades Academies Roll Allocation process Access for Priority Learners criterion has been adjusted to encourage increased access for all priority learners including Māori, Pacific people, people with disabilities, learners accessing learning support, and other students at risk of disengaging from education (including learners in Alternative Education or Activity Centres) who may benefit from an STP/Trades Academy programme. Access will support their continued engagement in education, achievement and their pathways planning.

Vocational Education and Training (VET)

- 15 TEC consulted with the Disabled Persons Assembly NZ (DPA) to ensure the VET marketing campaign is inclusive and resonates with disabled people. The DPA provided advice on how we should approach the depiction and inclusion of disabled people within the

advertisements/videos as well as the inclusion of accessibility elements such as captions on online video.

- 16 The campaign's digital advertising was checked against accessibility software to analyses and adjust the colour of text and backgrounds to ensure contrast levels and legibility.
- 17 In addition to the mainstream channels that reach disabled people, the VET digital advertising is targeting content and environments relating to disability services such as iHC, CCS Disability Action, Enable and others.
- 18 TEC are creating a custom affinity audience that takes the URLs, finds people who have visited similar sites, and serves them the digital advertising through the google network.
- 19 We are exploring further media targeting opportunities to effectively reach disabled people, including social media targeting.

Online Careers Planning Solution (OCPS)

- 20 TEC have included disabled people within the definition of our priority audience for design consideration (along with Māori, Pacific people and women). OCPS are including disabled people and people from the neurodiverse community in our user testing panels.
- 21 We are using the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines to develop the applications to a minimum of AA standard and for some elements AAA against the New Zealand specific WCAG 2.1 standards. We have also selected fonts that we have been tested from an accessibility perspective.

Direct Careers Guidance (DCG)

- 22 DCG has supported an approximate 269 disabled people or people with health conditions since is commenced in May 2020. Of those who have disclosed their disability or health conditions, there is a higher rate for those with mental health conditions (173 people) utilising the service compared to 96 people who disclosed physical conditions.
- 23 The provision for direct careers guidance was disestablished with the merge between Careers NZ and TEC in 2017, so TEC has contracted an external supplier, Career Development Association of New Zealand (CDANZ) to provide this service. Any longer term provision of free careers guidance (outside of school/tertiary environments) will be considered as part of the benefits and evaluation plan of this short term service in July 2021.

Programmes focused on transitioning students to employment

- 24 TEC and MoE officials are progressing a range of work to improve outcomes for disabled learners in tertiary education. This includes work on the Unified Funding System¹, Disability Action Plans, Kia Ōrite (i.e. the New Zealand Code of Practice for an Inclusive Tertiary Education Environment for Students with Impairments), and the Education (Pastoral Care of

¹ The Unified Funding System will be implemented from 2023.

Tertiary and International Students Code of Practice². Te Pūkenga is also progressing work (informed by MoE and disabled learners) to ensure inclusivity is a core part of its operating model.

- 25 Workbridge can provide support to disabled people to seek work. Some Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEOs) work directly with Workbridge to support disabled learners in their final year. Workbridge is involved in conversations with Te Pūkenga around how their services can be better utilised in vocational education. Expansion of Workbridge's capacity to support TEO and vocational learners would require an increase in funding for Workbridge to meet the potential demand. The TEC has a close relationship with Workbridge, who act in an advisory manner on several TEC led or funded projects in the disability space (such as the Kia Ōrite toolkit).
- 26 Ministry of Social Development's Mainstream programme (Employment and Internship) provides supported employment for disabled and neurodiverse people who may otherwise find it hard to obtain a job in the open market. The TEC is engaging with this program, as do many other government departments.

Current issues

- 27 Amongst TEC and wider MoE work programs, there are opportunities to create greater consistency of practice across the sector regarding how TEOs support their disabled learners. In particular, this work includes Disability Action Plans, Kia Ōrite (New Zealand Code of Practice for an Inclusive Tertiary Education Environment for Students with Impairments), and the work that Te Pūkenga is progressing on its operating model.



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Tertiary Education Commission

10 May 2021



Hon Chris Hipkins

Minister of Education

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² The draft code is currently out for public consultation until 21 May 2021. Final decisions will be sought from Cabinet in June with the Code released in July (and come into force from 1 January 2022).