

Aide-Memoire: 2020 Educational Performance Indicators

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education
From:	Gillian Dudgeon, Deputy Chief Executive, Delivery
Date:	28 July 2021
Reference:	AM-21-00397

Executive Summary

1. This aide memoire provides high level analysis of EPIs for the tertiary sector from 2016 to 2020, and investigates the impact of COVID-19 on educational performance.
2. Overall, 2020 education performance indicators (EPIs) for providers have largely remained consistent with long-term trends for each measure¹. Specifically, *course completion* and *qualification completion* rates were unchanged from 2019 (at 84% and 62% respectively), while *first year retention* increased (up 1%, from 75% in 2019 to 76% in 2020), and *progression from levels 1-4* decreased (down 1%, from 36% in 2019 to 35% in 2020). We expect the impact of COVID-19 on EPIs will become clearer in future updates as longer-term EPIs are confirmed.
3. Although EPI trends have not significantly changed from 2016 to 2020 overall, there were significant disruptions to long-term EPI trends in several key areas in 2020. These shifts show the impact of COVID-19 on the educational performance across the sector. Most notably:
 - a. The wānanga subsector showed the most significant changes to educational performance compared to other subsectors in 2020, with *course completion*, *first year retention*, and *progression from levels 1-4* rates falling from 2019². In 2020, wānanga saw fewer enrolments and higher course withdrawals due to COVID-19³. These factors appear to have adversely impacted the subsectors' educational performance.
 - b. International full-fee paying learners saw significant decreases to *first year retention* and *progression from levels 1-4* rates, following COVID-19 challenges in 2020⁴.
 - c. The parity gap increased, as the *course completion* rate fell for Māori learners in 2020⁵. This decrease was largely driven by the performance decreases seen in the wānanga subsector, which has a high proportion of learners identifying as Māori.

¹ See appendix table 1 for full breakdowns.

² See appendix table 2 for full breakdowns.

³ B-21-00132 December 2020 Enrolment Update, 9 April 2021.

⁴ See appendix table 3 for full breakdowns.

⁵ See appendix table 4 for full breakdowns.

- d. The *course completion* rate for sub-degree level⁶ courses decreased in 2020, whereas the *course completion* rate for level 7 degree courses increased⁷. These changes were consistent with the *course completion* rate shifts from 2019 to 2020 across different subsectors in 2020. Specifically:
 - i. universities, which had a higher *course completion* rate in 2020, represented most degree level course enrolments, and
 - ii. Te Pūkenga⁸, PTEs, and wānanga, which had lower *course completion* rates in 2020, represented most of the sub-degree level course enrolments.
4. In the transitional-industry training organisation (transitional-ITO) subsector, performance across all three EPIs fell in 2020⁹. Of these, the *credit achievement* rate saw the most significant decrease¹⁰.
 - a. This was largely due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the subsector, as many apprenticeship and traineeships were put on hold.
 - b. There was a significant decrease in the *credit achievement* rate for apprentices, which fell from 86% in 2019 to 77% in 2020 (down 9 percentage points). This was largely due to the introduction of both Targeted Training and Apprenticeship Fund (TTAF) and Apprenticeship Boost initiative (ABI), which resulted in a large increase in apprenticeship enrolment numbers.
 - c. The TTAF and ABI initiatives were introduced in the second half of 2020, and new and existing employers therefore had less time to adjust to accommodate new apprentices, and learners had less time to achieve their credit requirements.

Purpose

5. The purpose of this briefing is to provide high level analysis of EPIs for the tertiary sector from 2016 to 2020, and to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on educational performance.
6. Note that the impact of COVID-19 on EPIs will become clearer in future updates as longer-term EPIs are confirmed. Specifically, it will take a few more years to measure the flow-on impacts of disruptions to shorter-term EPIs, like *course completion* and *first year retention* rates, on the *qualification completion* rate.
7. We recommend this aide-memoire is proactively released in full.

Background

8. EPI measures are intended to provide a holistic view of educational performance. These measures allow the TEC and tertiary education organisations (TEOs) to consistently track and compare educational performance across the tertiary sector at various levels of detail. For

⁶ Sub-degree level qualifications include NZQF levels 1 to 3 and 4 to 7 (non-degree).

⁷ See appendix table 5 for full breakdowns.

⁸ Te Pūkenga stood up on 1 April 2020, and brings together 16 Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs) into one organisation. Note that this aide memoire will refer to ITPs in 2019 as Te Pūkenga for consistency.

⁹ See appendix table 6 for full breakdowns.

¹⁰ See appendix table 7 for full breakdowns.

example, EPIs can be used to compare educational performance at TEO, subsector, funding source (eg, TEC-funded, international full-fee paying), and different demographic levels (eg, gender, age, and ethnicity).

9. The TEC has published TEO-level EPIs on its website each year since 2009. For providers, including Te Pūkenga, universities, wānanga and private training establishments (PTEs), four performance measures make up their EPIs:

- *course completion rate*, the proportion of successful course completions each year, relative to total course enrolments;
- *cohort-based qualification completion rate*, the proportion of students in a starting cohort that go on to complete a qualification at the same level at the same TEO;
- *first year retention rate*, the proportion of students that enrol in their second year of study for their intended qualification after their first year of study, relative to the rest of their cohort; and
- *progression rate from levels 1-4*, the proportion of students who complete a tertiary qualification at NZQF levels 1-4, and enrol in a higher tertiary qualification within 12 months of their qualification completion.

10. For transitional-ITOs a different methodology is used. Three performance measures make up their EPIs:

- *credit achievement rate*, the proportion of credits obtained each year, relative to total credit enrolments;
- *cohort-based programme completion rate*, the proportion of industry trainees and apprentices in a starting cohort that go on to complete a programme at the same level of qualification at the same transitional-ITO; and
- *first year retention rate for apprentices*, the proportion of apprentices that enrol in the second year of an apprenticeship for their intended qualification after completing their first year, relative to the rest of their cohort.

11. The TEC uses EPIs to monitor a TEO's performance and to help inform investment decisions on funding as part of the annual Investment Plan cycle. EPIs are also used to engage with TEOs about their performance.

- a. As part of TEC's Investment Planning process, all TEOs that are required to submit an Investment Plan and are currently receiving more than \$5 million in funding also need to submit a Learner Success Plan (LSP)¹¹ this year.
- b. TEC has also developed Māori and Pacific Peoples target EPI commitments that are realistic for each provider.

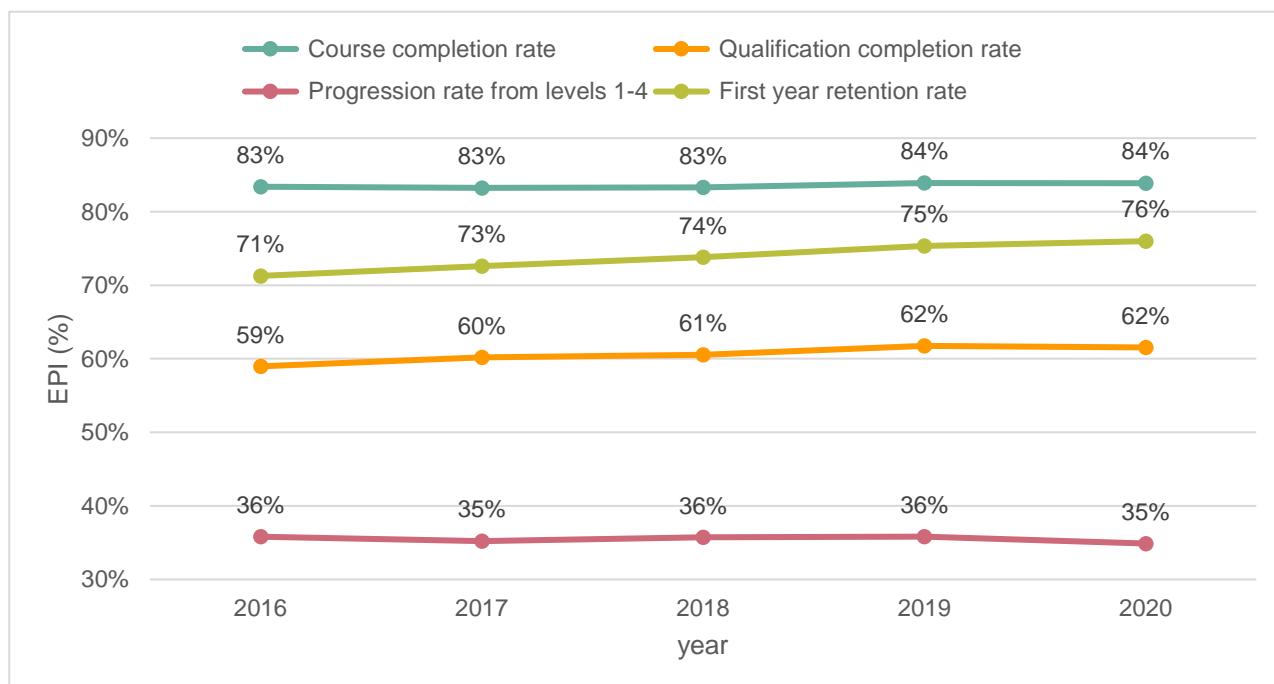
12. On 9 July 2021, we published TEO-level EPIs on our website. These were released as interactive charts for providers and as PDF reports for transitional-ITOs.

¹¹ The Learner Success Plan describes a TEO's approach to improving outcomes for all learners. It includes sections on parity of participation and achievement; organisational commitment; culturally appropriate and responsive process and practice; and partnerships with stakeholders.

2020 provider performance holds steady despite COVID-19

13. Figure 1 shows EPIs for tertiary providers from 2016 to 2020¹.
14. Overall, *course completion*, *progression from levels 1-4*, and *first year retention* 2020 EPIs for providers have remained consistent with long-term trends for each measure. The *qualification completion* rate, however, remained unchanged at 62% for 2019 and 2020¹².
15. While overall EPI trends have not significantly changed in the five years to 2020, lower-level analysis shows that there were significant disruptions to long-term EPI trends in several areas in 2020. These shifts reveal the impact of COVID-19 on the educational performance across the sector. We have highlighted areas that show significant shifts from 2019 to 2020 in the sections below.

Figure 1: Provider-based educational performance indicators for years 2016 to 2020¹.



Wānanga educational performance fell due to COVID-19

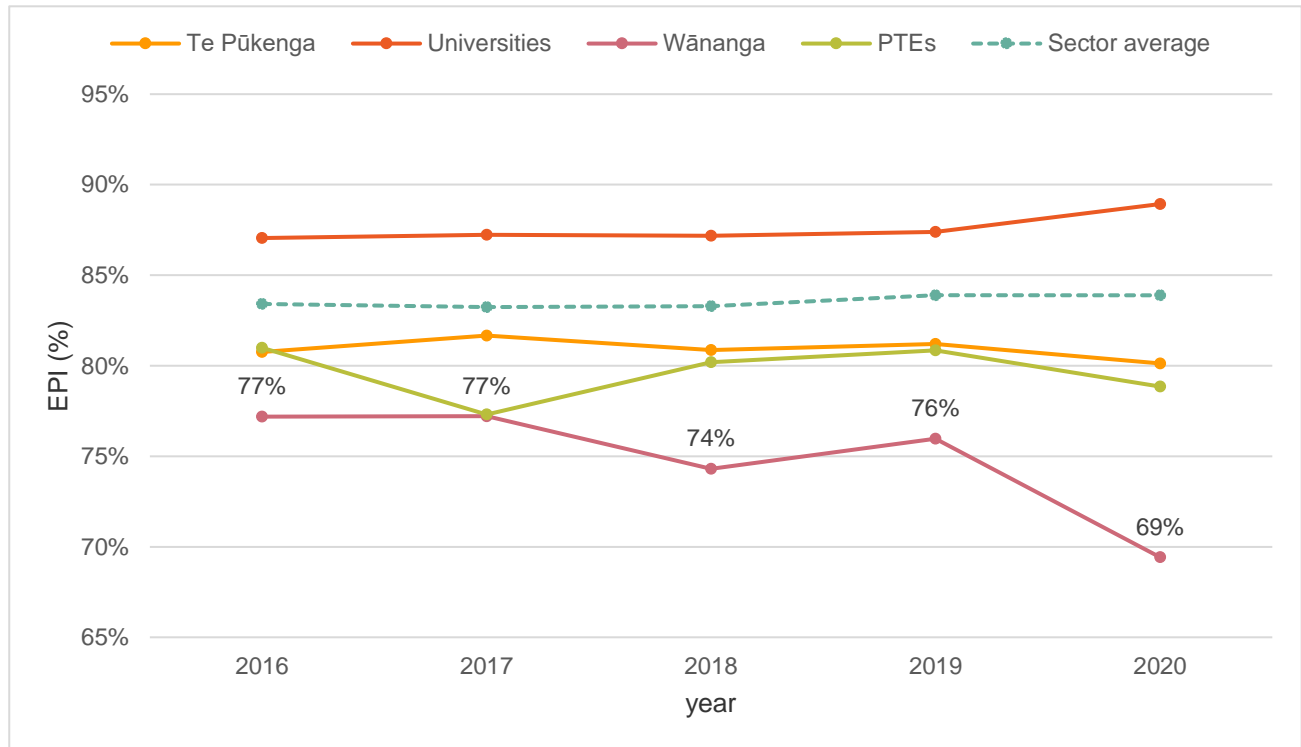
16. In 2020, the impacts of COVID-19 on educational performance were most pronounced in the wānanga subsector, with *course completion*, *first year retention*, and *progression from levels 1-4* rates falling from 2019².
17. The wānanga subsector saw fewer enrolments and higher course withdrawals in 2020 due to the social and financial impacts of COVID-19. These factors appear to have, in turn, impacted educational performance³. Factors that likely contributed to the EPI decreases in 2020 include:
 - a. all three wānanga were unable to use traditional delivery through marae,

¹² Note that COVID-19 presented various challenges to the tertiary sector, including supporting student wellbeing through periods of social and financial uncertainty, and students adapting to online course delivery. TEOs may have therefore adopted a number of approaches when considering educational performance, including grade scale weighting, which may have impacted their EPIs. TEOs also adopted a number of approaches to course withdrawals, for example allowing students to temporarily put their studies on hold, or allowing learners to re-enrol later in the year.

- b. for many marae it took a long time to reopen for study,
- c. only one of the wānanga was able to shift to online delivery.

18. Figure 2 shows the *course completion* rate by subsector from 2016 to 2020².

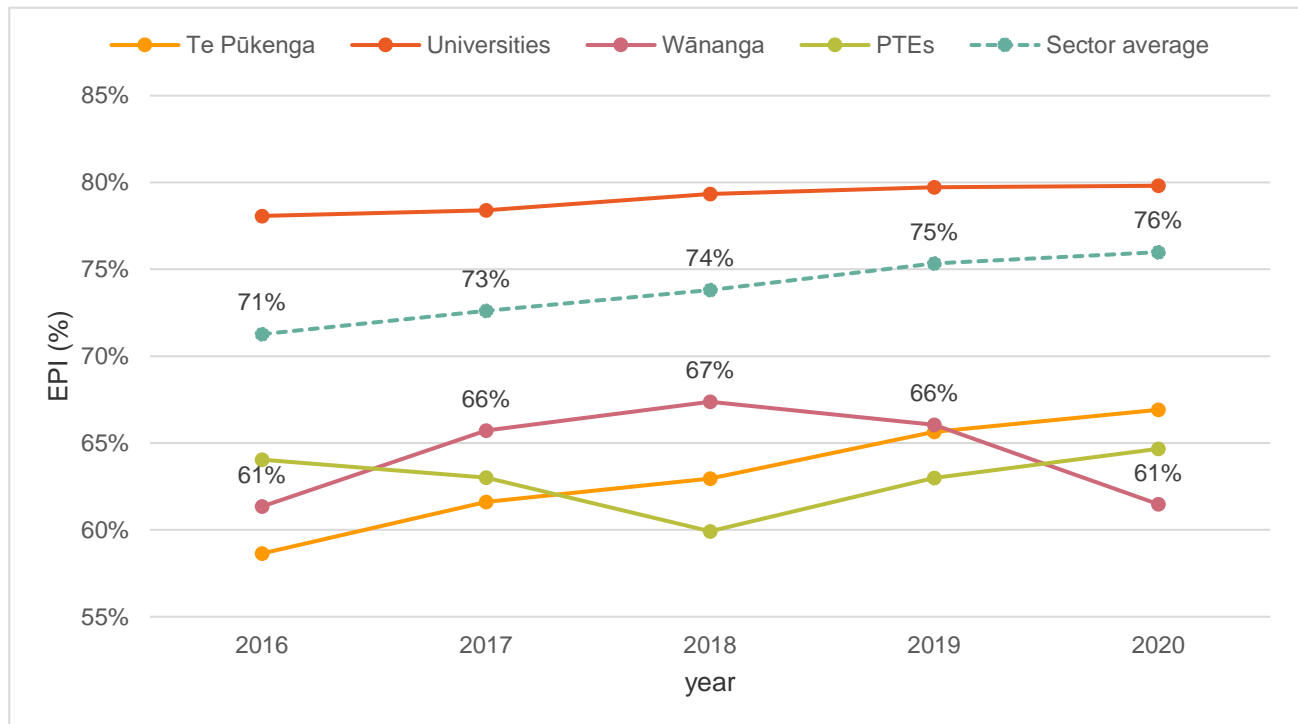
Figure 2: Course completion rate by subsector, for years 2016 to 2020².



19. In 2020, the *course completion* rate in the wānanga subsector significantly decreased from 2019, falling from 76% in 2019 to 69% in 2020 (down 7 percentage points). Te Pūkenga and PTEs also experienced a decrease in *course completion* rates in 2020, with Te Pūkenga falling from 81% in 2019 to 80% in 2020, and PTEs falling from 81% in 2019 to 79%.

20. Figure 3 shows *first year retention* rate by subsector from 2016 to 2020².

Figure 3: First year retention rate by subsector, for years 2016 to 2020².

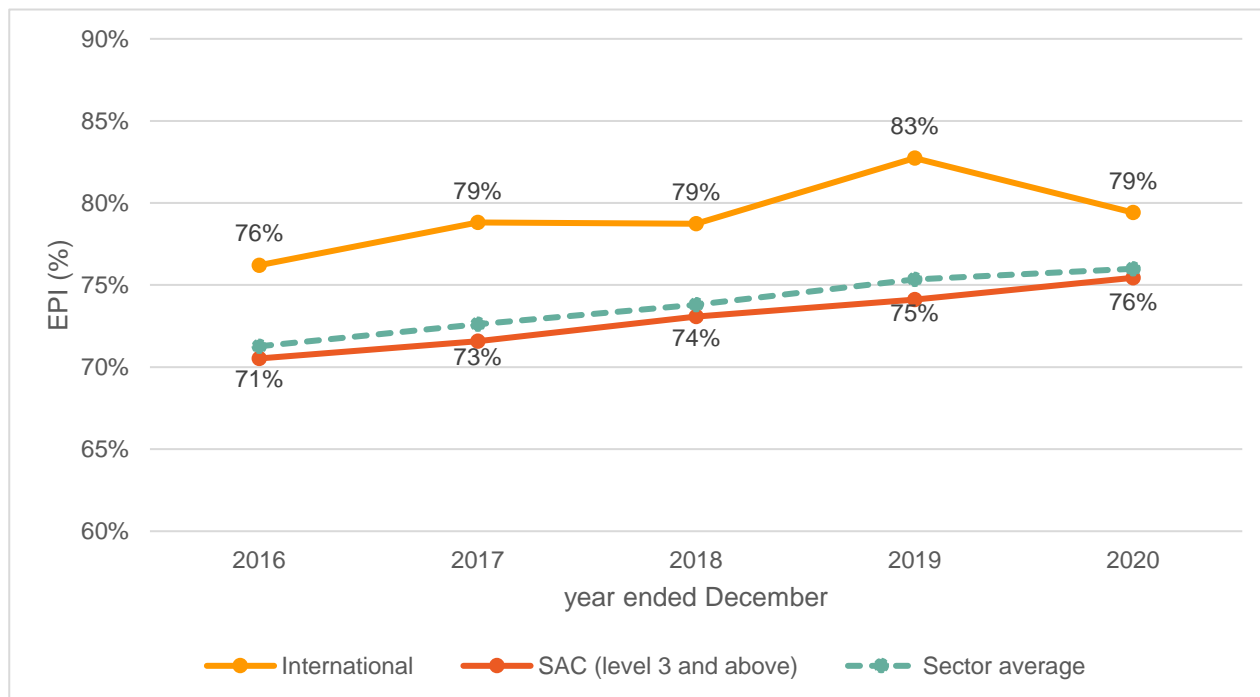


21. The first year retention rate in the wānanga subsector fell significantly, down from 66% in 2019 to 61% in 2020 (down 5 percentage points).
22. The first year retention rate in the university subsector held steady while Te Pūkenga and PTEs increased by 1 and 2 percentage points respectively. Note that shifts in the first year retention rate will likely have an effect on the qualification completion rate in future years.
23. The *progression from levels 1-4* rate in the wānanga subsector also decreased in 2020, down from 33% in 2019 to 30% in 2020 (down 3 percentage points)².

First year retention rates fall for international students in 2020

24. In 2020, international travel restrictions during COVID-19 led to a significant decrease in international full-fee paying learner enrolments. The number of international learners decreased from 57,980 learners in 2019 to 47,370 learners in 2020 (-10,610 learners). This contrasts with 2016 to 2019, when international enrolment numbers had held steady at approximately 58,000 learners each year.
25. COVID-19 challenges in 2020 have resulted in significant decreases to *first year retention* and *progression from levels 1-4* rates for international full-fee paying learners in 2020.
26. Figure 4 shows *first year retention* rates for international full-fee paying learners, compared to Student Achievement Component (SAC) level 3 and above funded learners and the sector average, from 2016 to 2020².

Figure 4: First year retention rate by funding source: International full fee paying and Student Achievement Component level 3 and above funding compared to sector average, for years 2016 to 2020^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}



27. For the last five years, international learners have recorded *first year retention* rates above the sector average. Performance on this measure, however, significantly decreased in 2020, down from 83% in 2019 to 79% in 2020 (down 4 percentage points). The PTE subsector had the greatest decline, showing a significant decrease of 12 percentage points between 2019 and 2020.

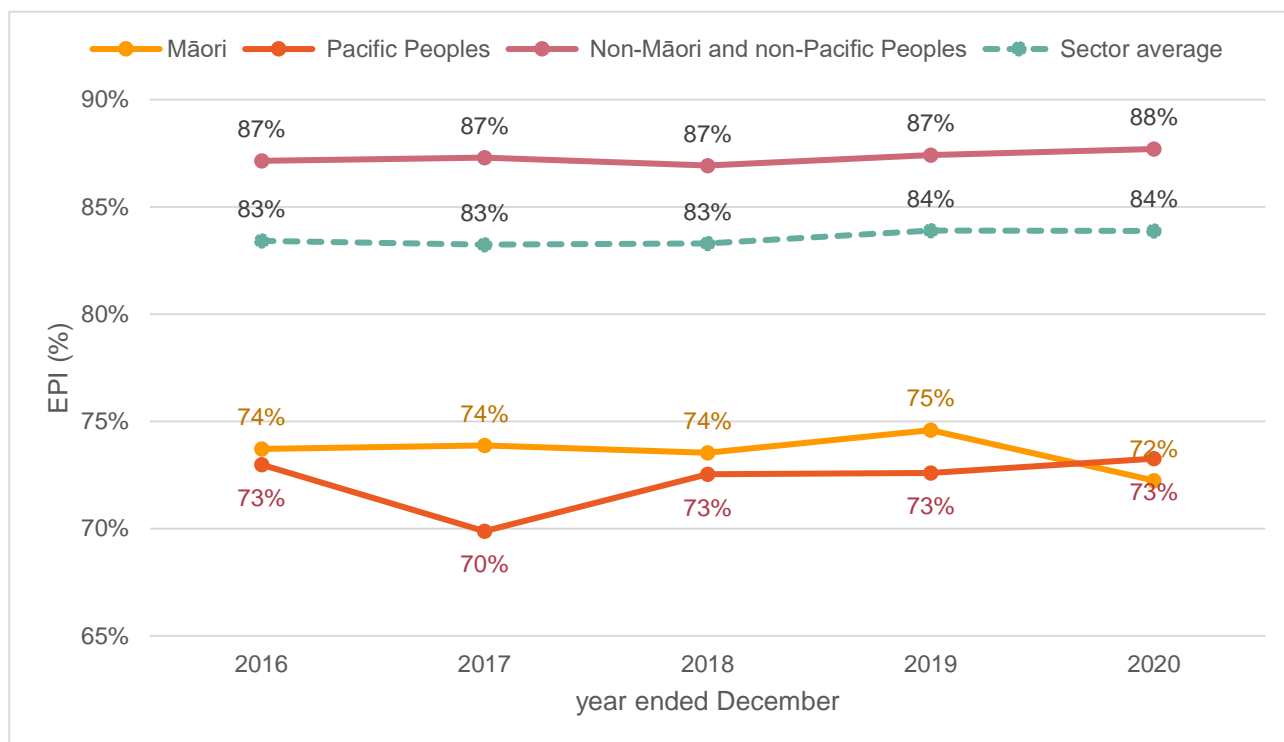
28. The *first year retention* rate for SAC level 3 and above learners increased from 74% in 2019 to 75% in 2020^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}. For this group, the *first year retention* rate has continued to closely align with the sector average.

29. Although international full-fee paying learners have continued to show significantly higher rates of *progression from levels 1-4* than the sector average, this indicator has decreased significantly in 2020, down from 61% in 2019 to 54% in 2020 (down 7 percentage points). In comparison, *progression from levels 1-4* rates for SAC level 3 and above has held steady at 32% from 2017 to 2020.

Parity gap increases as course completion rate falls for Māori learners

30. In 2020, the parity gap has increased for *course completion* rates. Performance on this measure has fallen for learners identifying as Māori, while performance has held steady for Pacific Peoples and non-Māori and non-Pacific Peoples. Figure 5 shows the *course completion* rate by ethnicity group from 2016 to 2020^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}

Figure 5: Course completion rates by ethnicity group for Māori, Pacific Peoples, and non-Māori and non-Pacific Peoples, for years 2016 to 2020^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}

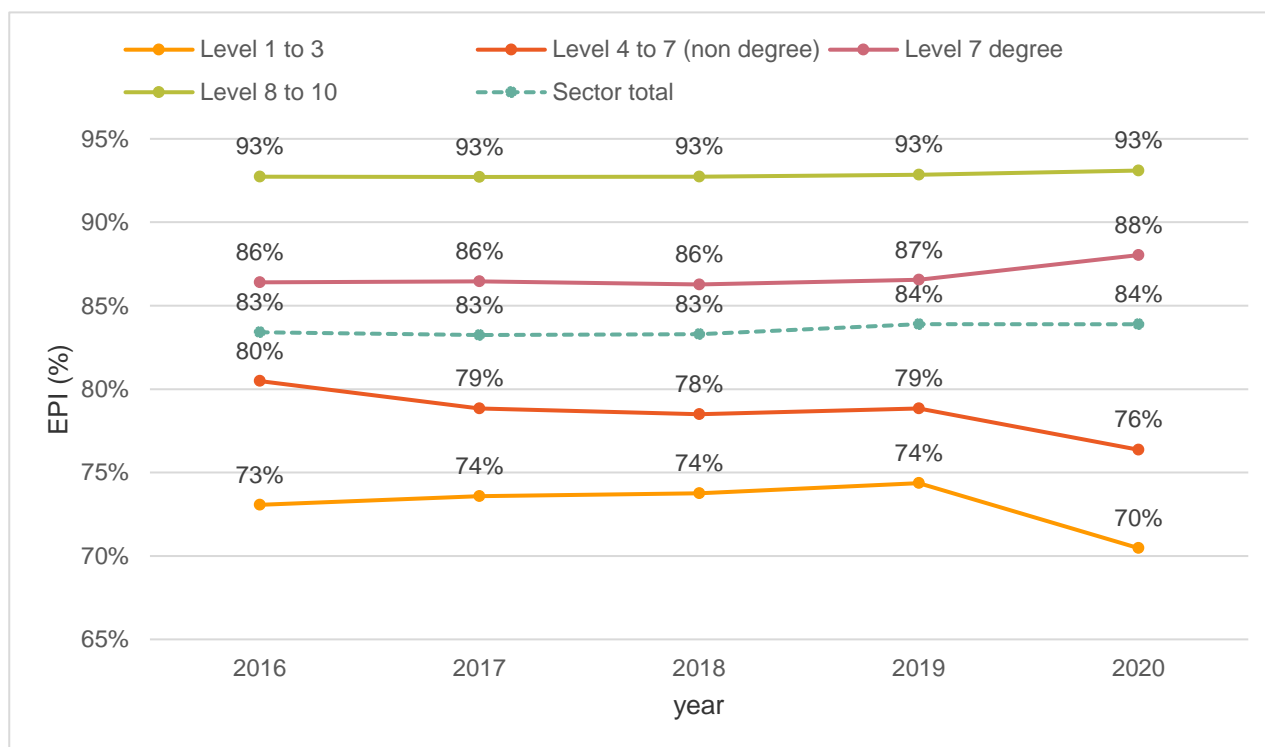


31. A steady long-term trend of high course completion rates has continued for Non-Māori and non-Pacific Peoples. However, the *course completion* rate for Māori learners decreased, falling from 75% in 2019 to 72% in 2020 (down 3 percentage points), while performance has held steady at 73% for Pacific Peoples in 2019 and 2020.
32. The *course completion* rate decrease for Māori learners in 2020 was influenced by the wānanga subsector, where the majority of learners identify as Māori each year. For example, 57% of all course enrolments in the wānanga subsector were from learners identifying as Māori in 2020. This compared to the total tertiary sector where 18% of all course enrolments were from learners identifying as Māori.
33. The lower *course completion* rate for Māori learners in 2020 will likely have a flow-on effect, and further increase disparities in the *qualification completion* rate in upcoming years. At degree level, the disparity between Māori and Pacific Peoples, and non-Māori non-Pacific Peoples *qualification completion* rates has been increasing in recent years.
34. TEC continues to focus on achieving parity of outcomes and performance for all learners. This year we have developed Māori and Pacific Peoples target EPI commitments for each individual provider. These are set at a level that asks for a substantial and realistic improvement in Māori and Pacific Peoples EPIs for each provider.

Course completion rate falls for levels 1-7 (non-degree), and increases for levels 7 degree and above

35. Figure 6 shows *course completion* rates by qualification cohort: levels 1 to 3, 4 to 7 (non-degree), 7 degree, and 8 to 10, from 2016 to 2020⁷.
36. The *course completion* rate has fallen for levels 1 to 3 and 4 to 7 non-degree in 2020, and held steady with long-term trends for levels 7 degree and above¹³.
- Specifically, the *course completion* rate for levels 1 to 3 decreased from 74% in 2019 to 70% in 2020 (down 4 percentage points), and decreased from 79% in 2019 to 76% in 2020 (down 3 percentage points) for levels 4 to 7 (non-degree).
 - Conversely, the *course completion* rate for level 7 degree has continued to increase for the second year in a row, to 88% in 2020, and remained steady at 93% for levels 8 to 10.

Figure 6: Course completion rate by qualification cohort: levels 1 to 3, 3 to 7 (non-degree), 7 degree, and 8 to 10, for years 2016 to 2020⁷.

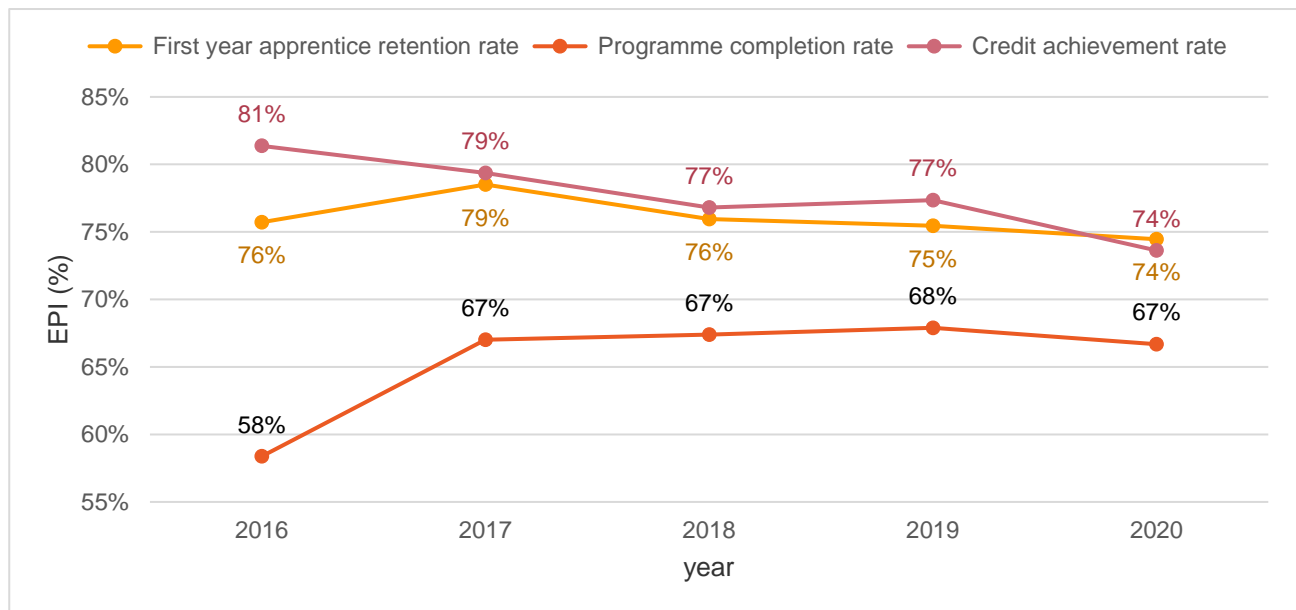


Transitional-ITOs EPIs: Credit achievement rate falls in 2020

37. In 2020, all three EPIs for the transitional-ITO subsector decreased from 2019.
38. Figure 7 shows EPIs for transitional-ITOs from 2016 to 2020⁹.

¹³ Note that levels 1 to 7 (non-degree) are primarily represented by course enrolments in Te Pūkenga (45%), PTEs (31%) and wānanga (19%) subsectors, while levels 7 degree and above mostly consist of course enrolments in universities (79%) and Te Pūkenga (16%).

Figure 7: Transitional-ITO educational performance indicators, for years 2016 to 2020⁹.



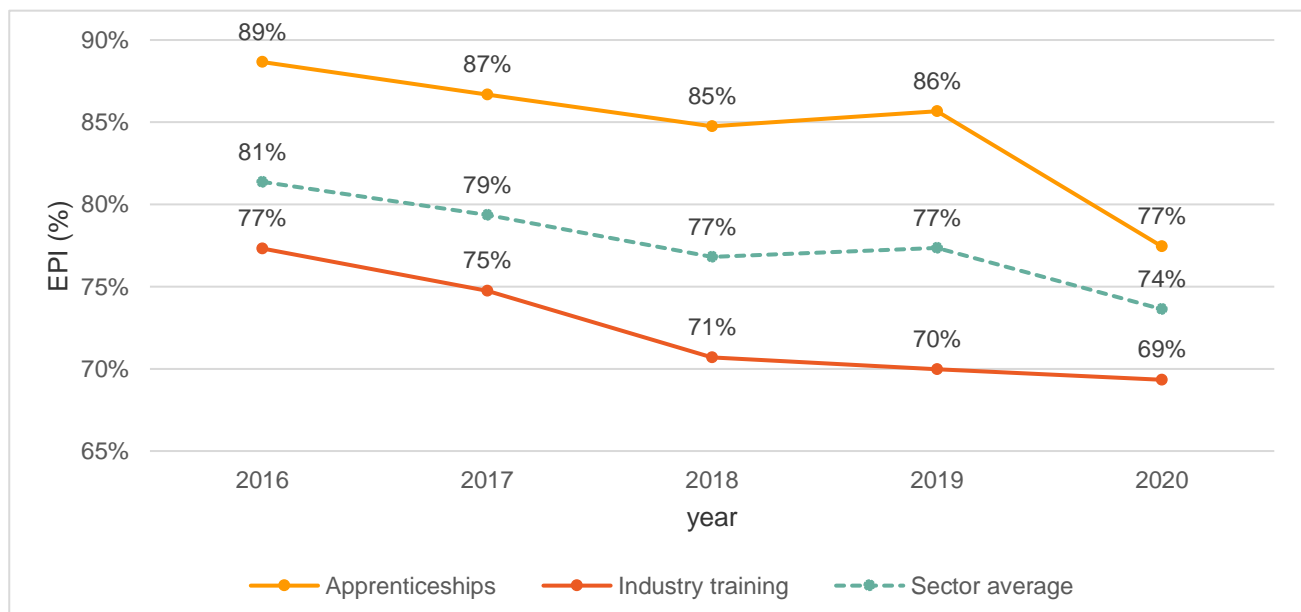
39. The *credit achievement* rate saw the most significant decrease, down from 77% in 2019 to 74% in 2020 (down 3 percentage points). In comparison, *first year retention* and *programme completion* rates were consistent with long-term trends, each falling 1% from 2019.

Credit achievement rate for apprentices significantly drops due to COVID-19

40. In 2020, apprentices have continued to show higher rates of *credit achievement* than industry trainees. However in 2020 *credit achievement* for apprentices fell significantly, down from 86% in 2019 to 77% in 2020 (down 9 percentage points).

41. Figure 8 shows the credit achievement rate for apprenticeships and industry training learners compared to the sector average, from 2016 to 2020¹⁰.

Figure 8: Credit achievement rate for apprenticeships and industry training learners compared to the sector average, for years 2016 to 2020¹⁰.



42. The decreases for both apprentices and industry trainees were largely due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the subsector, as many apprenticeships and traineeships were put on hold. Consequently, many apprentices could not achieve the number of credits they were expected to in 2020.
43. In addition, the number of apprentices significantly increased in the second half of 2020 following the introduction of the Targeted Training and Apprenticeship Fund (TTAF) in July and Apprenticeship Boost Initiatives (ABI) in August. The *credit achievement* rate may have fallen as a result, as employers adjusted to accommodate new apprentices. Additionally, apprentices who enrolled in the July to December 2020 period had less time to achieve the required amount of credits, compared to apprentices enrolled earlier in the year.
44. We will continue to monitor the impact of increased apprenticeship enrolments in 2020 on EPIs in upcoming years.

About the data

45. The EPI data used in this aide memoire is compiled from:
- a. April 2021 Single Data Return (SDR) for providers, and
 - b. Industry Training Register (ITR) for transitional-ITOs, which is finalised for the year ended December in late March.



Gillian Dudgeon

Deputy Chief Executive, Delivery
Tertiary Education Commission
28 July 2021



Hon Chris Hipkins

Minister of Education

05 / 08 / 2021

Appendixes

Table 1: Provider-based educational performance indicators, years 2016-2020

Year	Course completion rate	Cohort-based qualification completion	Progression from levels 1-4	First year retention rate
2016	83%	59%	36%	71%
2017	83%	60%	35%	73%
2018	83%	61%	36%	74%
2019	84%	62%	36%	75%
2020	84%	62%	35%	76%

Table 2: Provider-based educational performance indicators by subsector, years 2016-2020

Educational performance indicator (EPI)	Year	Subsector			
		Te Pūkenga	Universities	Wānanga	PTEs
Cohort-based qualification completion	2016	51%	63%	68%	64%
	2017	53%	63%	68%	64%
	2018	53%	64%	66%	65%
	2019	55%	64%	72%	64%
	2020	54%	65%	72%	63%
Cohort-based first year retention	2016	59%	78%	61%	64%
	2017	62%	78%	66%	63%
	2018	63%	79%	67%	60%
	2019	66%	80%	66%	63%
	2020	67%	80%	61%	65%
Course completion	2016	81%	87%	77%	81%
	2017	82%	87%	77%	77%
	2018	81%	87%	74%	80%
	2019	81%	87%	76%	81%
	2020	80%	89%	69%	79%
Progression from levels 1-4	2016	35%	69%	34%	36%
	2017	34%	70%	32%	38%
	2018	34%	71%	34%	38%
	2019	35%	88%	33%	38%
	2020	35%	88%	30%	38%

Table 3: Provider-based educational performance indicators by funding group: SAC levels 3 and above, international, and sector average, years 2016-2020

Educational performance indicator (EPI)	Year	Funding group		
		SAC (level 3+)	International	Sector average
Cohort-based qualification completion	2016	60%	68%	59%
	2017	60%	71%	60%
	2018	59%	71%	61%
	2019	61%	74%	62%
	2020	60%	74%	62%
Cohort-based first year retention	2016	71%	76%	71%
	2017	72%	79%	73%
	2018	73%	79%	74%
	2019	74%	83%	75%
	2020	75%	79%	76%
Course completion	2016	84%	90%	83%
	2017	83%	90%	83%
	2018	83%	90%	83%
	2019	83%	91%	84%
	2020	84%	92%	84%
Progression from levels 1-4	2016	33%	57%	36%
	2017	32%	60%	35%
	2018	32%	59%	36%
	2019	32%	61%	36%
	2020	32%	54%	35%

Table 4: Provider-based educational performance indicators by ethnicity group: Māori, Pacific Peoples, and non-Māori and non-Pacific Peoples, for years 2016-2020

Educational performance indicator (EPI)	Year	Ethnicity group		
		Māori	Pacific Peoples	Non-Māori and non-Pacific peoples
Cohort-based qualification completion	2016	55%	56%	61%
	2017	55%	56%	63%
	2018	55%	54%	63%
	2019	57%	55%	64%
	2020	57%	54%	64%
Cohort-based first year retention	2016	61%	68%	73%
	2017	63%	67%	75%
	2018	65%	68%	76%
	2019	66%	70%	77%
	2020	68%	69%	78%
Course completion	2016	74%	73%	87%
	2017	74%	70%	87%
	2018	74%	73%	87%

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	2019	75%	73%	87%
	2020	72%	73%	88%
Progression from levels 1-4	2016	37%	40%	34%
	2017	36%	40%	34%
	2018	35%	41%	35%
	2019	36%	42%	35%
	2020	35%	38%	35%

Table 5: Provider-based educational performance indicators by cohort: levels 1-3, 7-4 (non-degree), 7 degree, and 8-10, for years 2016-2020

Educational performance indicator (EPI)	Year	Cohort			
		Level 1 to 3	Level 4 to 7 (non-degree)	Level 7 degree	Level 8 to 10
Cohort-based qualification completion	2016	60%	55%	59%	72%
	2017	59%	58%	59%	72%
	2018	61%	57%	60%	73%
	2019	62%	61%	59%	73%
	2020	61%	59%	60%	73%
Cohort-based first year retention	2016	-	52%	75%	78%
	2017	-	55%	75%	78%
	2018	-	54%	76%	80%
	2019	-	58%	77%	80%
	2020	-	60%	77%	80%
Course completion	2016	73%	80%	86%	93%
	2017	74%	79%	86%	93%
	2018	74%	78%	86%	93%
	2019	74%	79%	87%	93%
	2020	70%	76%	88%	93%
Progression from levels 1-4	2016	38%	32%	-	-
	2017	38%	31%	-	-
	2018	39%	30%	-	-
	2019	38%	33%	-	-
	2020	36%	33%	-	-

Table 6: Transitional-industry training organisations educational performance indicators, for years 2016 to 2020

Year	First year retention rate for apprentices	Programme completion rate	Credit achievement
2016	76%	58%	81%
2017	79%	67%	79%
2018	76%	67%	77%
2019	75%	68%	77%
2020	74%	67%	74%

Table 7: Transitional-industry training organisation educational performance indicators by learner type: apprenticeships and industry training, for years 2016 to 2020

Educational performance indicator (EPI)	Year	Learner type	
		Apprenticeships	Industry training
First year retention rate for apprentices	2016	76%	-
	2017	79%	-
	2018	76%	-
	2019	75%	-
	2020	74%	-
Programme completion rate	2016	54%	59%
	2017	47%	69%
	2018	42%	71%
	2019	62%	70%
	2020	56%	69%
Credit achievement	2016	89%	77%
	2017	87%	75%
	2018	85%	71%
	2019	86%	70%
	2020	77%	69%