



# Professional Growth Cycle for tumuaki | principals and ECE professional leaders

## FAQs for school boards and ECE employers

For the sake of clarity, tumuaki | principals and ECE professional leaders will be referred to collectively in this document as 'professional leaders.'

### 1. What is the Professional Growth Cycle (PGC) for tumuaki | principals and ECE professional leaders?

The Professional Growth Cycle is a high trust, reflective, ongoing process to support and structure the professional learning and growth of the professional leader. It reflects the profession's commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, ngā uara | our values, *Ngā Tikanga Matatika*, *Ngā Paerewa | Our Code, Our Standards*, and focuses on the professional leader's role as a 'leader of learning'. The professional growth arising from engagement and participation in the PGC is the most significant outcome for leaders. Connected to that professional growth, the professional growth cycle may also likely provide assurance that practising certificate endorsements are based on the professional leader meeting [Ngā Paerewa | Standards](#).

### 2. How does a professional leader meet the requirements of their PGC?

The first four elements of the [PGC for leaders](#) are about the process and requirements of the PGC. The fifth and sixth elements relate to the renewal of a professional leader's practising certificate. In summary - and in nearly all cases - a professional leader will do the following to fulfill the requirements of their PGC:

- A: Understand *Ngā Paerewa | Standards*, and what meeting and using them in every day practice looks like.
- B: Plan their professional learning for their own PGC, share it with and receive support from their presiding board member or employer, so they can fully engage in their PGC.
- C: Work collegially and regularly with other professional leaders from their network to learn and grow their practice.
- D: Seek and reflect on a range of feedback; including feedback from their presiding board member/employer.
- E: A member of their professional learning network of colleagues will confirm annually that the professional leader participated in a PGC and meets *Ngā Paerewa | Standards*.
- F: Or if the PGC colleague (i.e., the endorser) has concerns and/or does not think the professional leader meets *Ngā Paerewa | Standards*, the endorser informs the professional leader, who in turn informs their employer. The [Aratohu Kaiohia | Endorser Guidelines](#) outline the process to follow.

### **3. Is it the same as the PGC for teachers?**

They are similar, in that, reflection, feedback, learning, and ongoing professional interactions with colleagues are key to ongoing development, and in that there are six elements to both PGC types. However, the managerial, administrative, and 'chief executive' functions of professional leaders create greater frequency of circumstances for leaders to be operating outside of the framework of *Ngā Paerewa | Standards* in everyday practice than that of teachers. So, although the 2019 Accord released teachers from 'appraisal', professional leaders will possibly still need to undertake 'appraisal' processes for role aspects beyond the scope of *Ngā Paerewa | Standards* for the foreseeable future.

### **4. Why has there been a change?**

While appraisal was first established as a tool to support professional reflection and development, over time it had become compliance-focused in many (not all) contexts. It too often had a significant impact on workload and some teachers and professional leaders argued it had limited impact on quality professional practice. As part of the 2019 collective bargaining process between the MoE, NZEI, and PPTA an 'Accord' was agreed to include the removal of performance appraisal for teachers as an accountability measure.

The PGC for professional leaders is intended to create more equitable, contextually responsive access to opportunities for learning and growth than currently occurs, because of highly varied appraisal approaches and systems across early learning centres, schools, and kura in Aotearoa New Zealand.

### **5. How was the Professional Growth Cycle developed?**

The Council assembled a working group of cross-sector representatives (including NZSTA) to decide what could be implemented to support teacher growth, encourage an understanding of how *Ngā Paerewa | Standards* are used in daily practice, and provide assurance that practising certificate endorsements are based on *Ngā Tikanga Matatika, Ngā Paerewa | Our Code, Our Standards*.

The PGC for teachers was introduced in May 2020. The same working group developed the PGC for tumuaki | principals and ECE professional leaders which was launched in October 2021 and needs to be in place for all professional leaders, with the support of their board/employer, by February 2023. Professional leaders can begin their PGC at any stage before then.

### **6. Who will endorse professional leaders for the renewal of their practising certificate?**

Professional leaders will be endorsed by a professional leader colleague from within their professional learning network who holds a Tiwhikete Whakaakoranga Tūturu | Full Practising Certificate (Category One). The endorsement decision will be based on the professional judgement that the endorser has of the professional leader's practice, supported by the endorser's knowledge of the professional leader's focus areas for growth, from regular endorser/leader conversations about *Ngā Paerewa | Standards* for the teaching profession in daily practice, and from observation/feedback derived from multiple stakeholders.

## **7. What's expected of the “...professional learning network of colleagues...” that our professional leader is a part of?**

Most professional leaders already connect with professional colleagues as part of their everyday leadership practice; and every professional leader also needs to be part of a professional leader learning network as part of their PGC. Because the members of the PGC network will be responsible for endorsement decisions regarding recertification of members, it will be necessary for all PGC network members to be professional leaders holding a Tūturu | Full (Category One).

There will be a multitude of ways that PGC networks can occur; the Council will soon publish a document on this topic which will be published on [this Council webpage](#). Key components of successful network meetings are that they are regular, collaborative, reflective, supportive, responsive, intentionally cover the elements of the PGC and focus on professional learning and growth.

## **8. Is it the professional leader or the board/employer that decides who the professional leader's endorser will be?**

Two things to keep in mind are that the PGC is intended to be a high trust model, and that the endorsement is focusing whether the professional leader meets *Ngā Paerewa | Standards* and can have their practising certificate renewal endorsed. As part of their PGC, the professional leader will engage with a group of other educational professional leaders as a network. One of the things they will decide as a group is who will endorse each member of the network. This process cannot be reciprocal (i.e., two professional leaders cannot endorse each other) and a professional leader cannot be endorsed by a close relative. In short, it is the professional leader, in consultation with their professional learning network, who decides who the endorser will be.

This does not mean the board/employer cannot act if there are concerns regarding competence or conduct. There are still employment relations processes to follow in these cases.

## **9. How can we be sure that endorsement will be rigorous and valid, and endorsement decisions have full professional rigour?**

Professional leaders have been trusted to endorse teachers for many years, using their professional judgement and knowledge of a teacher's practice to confirm whether the teacher meets *Ngā Paerewa | Standards* as required for their practising certificate type. Professional leaders are very aware of the importance of maintaining the rigor of the endorsement process, both for the integrity of individual teachers and for the profession itself. With the professional leader and the endorser both belonging to a professional network, the other members of that network are effectively witnesses to all endorsement decisions from that network, therefore supplying a background layer of accountability – willingly applying insufficient rigour to endorsement decisions would effectively pose a code violation by any such professional leader and would therefore be extremely unlikely.

## **10. Do existing performance management practices – appraisal, principal's performance agreement, and attestation of professional standards – stay in place?**

Performance management practices, including appraisal and attestation of professional standards, are still in place, but this may change for boards and their principals later in 2022 as a result of the collective bargaining process. Regardless of the collective bargaining process later in 2022, *Ngā Paerewa | Standards* for the Teaching Profession will remain as the sole professional reference for the renewal of professional leaders' practising certificates. In the licensing criteria for the early learning sector, appraisal remains for employment 'human-resource' purposes. In some settings professional leaders and their board/employer have found that the PGC covers nearly all the contractual requirements.

## **11. What do the NZSTA and the ECE sector think about this new approach?**

During the development phase of this PGC there was wide consultation; and considerable data was received, analysed, and discussed by the working group. NZSTA and representatives from across the ECE sector were fully involved in, and supportive of, the development of the PGC. The Council keeps regular contact with all bodies who were part of the working group, to support implementation of the PGC for tumuaki (principals, and ECE professional leaders.

## **12. How will we know if our professional leader is continuing to meet the requirements for their practising certificate?**

The board/employer will receive confirmation annually that the professional leader continues to meet *Ngā Paerewa | Standards*. Also, just as has always been the case, presiding members will receive regular reports from their professional leader about progress and achievements in relation to annual plan objectives and other areas of centre, school, or kura life.

If things are not going well, the board/employer will become aware of issues via the complaints and concerns processes.

## **13. Can we still have an external appraisal of our professional leader?**

The intention is that the professional learning network is the heart of the PGC, and that professional recertification endorsement is driven from within that network. In some cases, PGC networks may wish external providers to have a role in matters such as upskilling professional leaders with approaches to coaching, or by facilitating a network during its initial stages. In such cases, this external person would act as a guide only, and would have no voice in recertification endorsement decisions by network members. As discussed earlier in this document, appraisal sits outside of the Standards for the Teaching Profession | *Ngā Paerewa mō te Umanga Whakaakoranga* within the PGC context. If a professional leader and/or their board/employer wishes to pursue an external appraisal process for their setting, this work would necessarily be outside the PGC network of colleagues, and that PGC network's influence.

## **14. If discipline and/or competence issues exist, will the PGC be able to deal with them?**

The PGC is designed to enhance professional growth and learning. The PGC is not a suitable tool/process to deal with conduct, complaints and serious competence issues. There are separate processes in place for these types of employment matters should they arise.

## **15. How can boards and employers support their professional leader in their PGC?**

A key to the success of the PGC is that a professional leader is able to connect with professional colleagues – and this takes time. Professional leaders will need to prioritise this time which can be difficult because of their busy, demanding, and complex roles. Boards/employers can help by checking how their professional leader is progressing with this challenge, and by ensuring funds/resources are available for a range of 'supports', i.e., release time, learning resources, seminars, and workshops. Professional leaders will also experience support if boards/employers are familiar with the requirements of the PGC and show interest in their leader's PGC.

**16. If our professional leader’s endorser is concerned that the leader might not or does not meet *Ngā Paerewa | Standards*, when and how do we as the board/employer get involved?**

The professional network colleague who is acting as endorser will inform the professional leader of possible issue(s) as soon as they occur, they’ll together discuss steps to address the matter, and agree on a timeline for the steps. If this does not resolve the issues, the endorser may choose not to endorse the professional leader’s practising certificate renewal. The endorser must advise the professional leader that they have unresolved concerns that mean they may not endorse their renewal before the endorsement process begins.

The professional leader must inform their board/employer as soon as they are aware that their practicing certificate will not be endorsed. Therefore, the board/employer will learn about the situation from their professional leader themselves, not from the endorser.

**17. What resources are there to help us understand and support the implementation of our professional leader’s PGC?**

In addition to these FAQ’s there is also a video to support Boards/ECE employers. More resources are being developed and will be posted in 2022/2023 on [this Council webpage](#).

**18. Is there a helpdesk or something if we have questions?**

Leaders, boards and employers are encouraged to email us at the Council with questions, via [pgc@teachingcouncil.nz](mailto:pgc@teachingcouncil.nz), or call (04) 471 0852 and select option 9 to be connected with the Professional Leaders’ PGC team.