

TEACHING COUNCIL

NEW ZEALAND | Matatū Aotearoa

27 May 2020

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 13 May 2020, in which you ask for information relating to the ECE discretionary pathway.

“Discretionary Pathway’ teachers in ECE

I am inquiring about these teachers, how many there are, and a time line when they were granted teacher registration from the Teaching Council.

I understand the fact that many of these teachers, while recognised by the Teaching Council, have not been recognised by the Ministry of Education as accredited ECE teachers and this situation is being remedied.

Nevertheless, data on this variance is being used to justify some questionable actions by the Ministry, and of course, teachers and their families have been severely affected.”

We have treated your request as being under the Official Information Act, and I am able to advise as follows.

In New Zealand teacher registration and certification are not sector specific. The Council does not specifically register teachers as early childhood teachers, primary teachers or secondary teachers. It is up to an employer to determine whether a certificated teacher has the qualifications, skills and experience to employ them in a teaching position at their centre/school as well as to determine if the person meets the requirements for funding/licensing etc in the ECE sector.

Discretionary pathways cases are handled outside of our ECR customer management system because when they are logged in the ECR systems, they are not ‘tagged’ as such. Therefore, they are not distinguishable within the database. I am advised that there is not a query that would pull that data from ECR as it is not a parameter defined in any of the fields. In this respect, we are not able to provide the statistics you request, and we rely on section 18(g) of the OIA because we do not have this information.

I can, however, offer the following background. As you will be aware, the Ministry of Education in New Zealand sets the requirements for funding and licensing in the early childhood sector. This includes what criteria a person must meet to be considered as ‘qualified’ for the purposes of funding. The Ministry of Education has set these requirements and the Council is not responsible for assessing them.

I can further advise that in order to be funded by the Ministry of Education as a ‘qualified teacher’ in ECE, a person is required to hold registration and a practising certificate AND an approved ECE or Primary qualification (or an comparable qualification). To date, this has excluded teachers who have been through the “discretionary pathway” at the Teaching Council, which includes consideration of qualifications and experience. The Teaching Council only exercise this discretion if a person’s qualifications do not meet core knowledge requirements of an initial teaching qualification in New Zealand.

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From mid-2018 the Teaching Council started adding a statement to approval letters to show that approval for that person is appropriate for teaching in the ECE sector. This has become known as an “ECE endorsement”. The Teaching Council proactively approached the Ministry, with the Early Childhood Council to seek change to the way the Ministry assessed the funded role. Please note, due to that work, the Ministry now recognises this endorsement and will provide funding for teachers with this statement on their approval letters. The Teaching Council is currently actively exploring options for those employed prior to this arrangement starting in mid-2018.

I hope this satisfies your query, in part. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact Sandra Kelman, Government Relations & Information Manager who may be able to provide further assistance should you be willing to change or refine your request. Her email address is sandra.kelman@teachingcouncil.nz.

Nāku noa, nā



Pauline Barnes
Deputy Chief Executive Professional Services

