

# Transitioning from the 2017 Standards to the 2026 Standards:

What's similar and  
what's different?

October 2025



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# Introduction

In mid-2025, the Teaching Council published the 2026 Standards for the Teaching Profession. Over the next few years, the sector will be engaged in migrating from using the 2017 Standards to the 2026 Standards.

This short publication is intended to assist this process by providing a simple high-level account of the differences and similarities between the two sets of Standards.

In broad terms, that account can be summarised as follows:

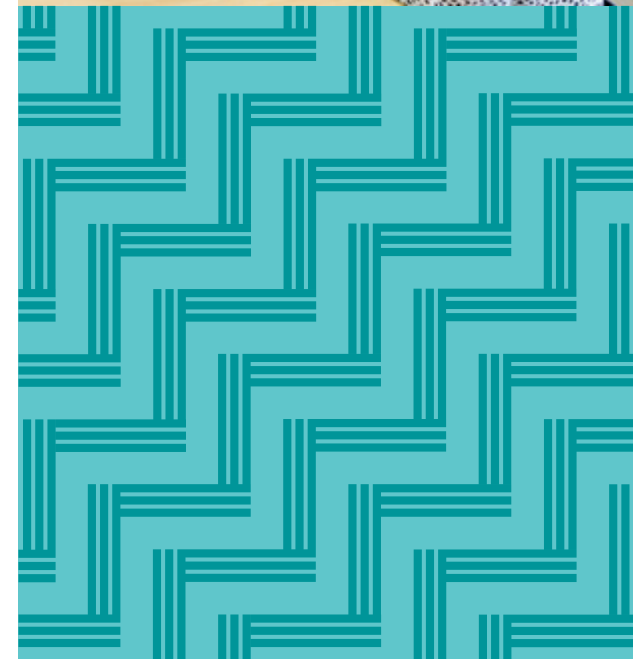
- Standards 1, 4, 7 and 8 are substantially the same between 2017 and 2026.
- Standard 2 and all focus areas have a changed context.
- Standard 3 overall and Focus areas 3.1 and 3.2 are largely new.
- Focus areas 5.3 and 5.4 of Standard 5 are largely new.
- Standard 6 largely reflects one of the (optional) elaborations of the 2017 Standards.

The way that these differences and similarities highlighted in this publication influence the migration process will depend on context.

For instance, the way this works for the Professional Growth Cycle will be quite different from the way it impacts upon Initial Teacher Education programmes.

The Teaching Council will provide further support and guidance that is tailored to these particular processes; this will draw upon the analysis in this publication.

*Transitioning from the 2017 Standards to the 2026 Standards: What's similar and what's different?* can be usefully read alongside *A Guide to the standards and focus areas of the 2026 Standards for the Teaching Profession*, which is being published at the same time.



## Key Terms

**The 2017 Standards:** In this document, this phrase refers to *Ngā Paerewa mō te Umanga Whakaakoranga | Standards for the Teaching Profession*, which were approved by the Teaching Council in 2017. The 2017 Standards were published as part of the document *Ngā Tikanga Matatika, Ngā Paerewa | Our Code, Our Standards*.

**The 2026 Standards:** In this document, this phrase refers to the 2026 Standards for the Teaching Profession, which were approved by the Teaching Council in 2025, and which are intended to come into widespread use in 2026 and come into full effect in 2027. The phrase 'the 2026 Standards' is intended to encompass the eight standards, the three domains, and the 33 focus areas. The 2026 Standards are recorded, at the time of writing, in the publication *Introducing the 2026 Standards for the Teaching Profession*.

**Domain:** Each standard within the 2026 Standards is identified as sitting within one or more of the three professional domains, 'Professional knowledge', 'Professional practice' and 'Professional engagement'. The domains are a means of thinking about and interpreting the eight standards and the focus areas that sit within each of these.

**Elaboration:** Each standard within the 2017 Standards has 3-7 elaborations sitting under it. The elaborations do not have formal standing, but can be used to interpret that standard.

**Focus area:** Each standard within the 2026 Standards has 3-6 focus areas sitting under it, which have the effect of interpreting that standard. The focus areas are considered to be part of 'the 2026 Standards'.

**Standard(s):** In this document, other than when phrased as 'the 2026 Standards' or 'the 2017 Standards', the terms 'standard' or 'standards' refer to either, depending on context, one or more of the six top-level elements of the 2017 Standards or one or more of the eight top-level elements of the 2026 Standards.

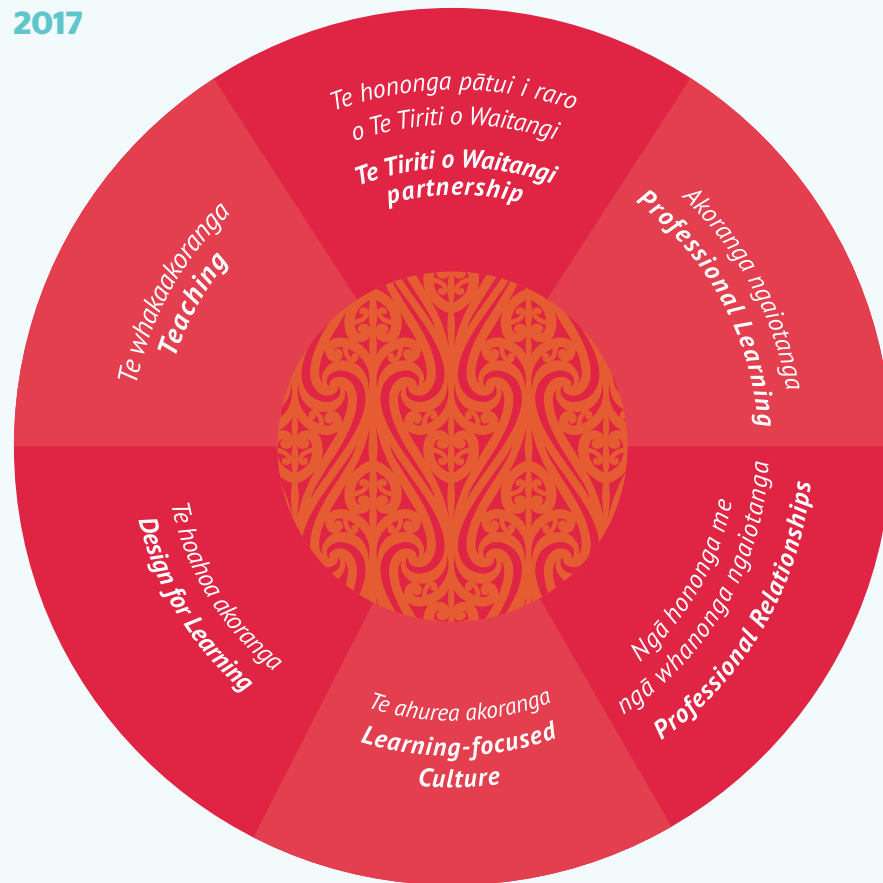




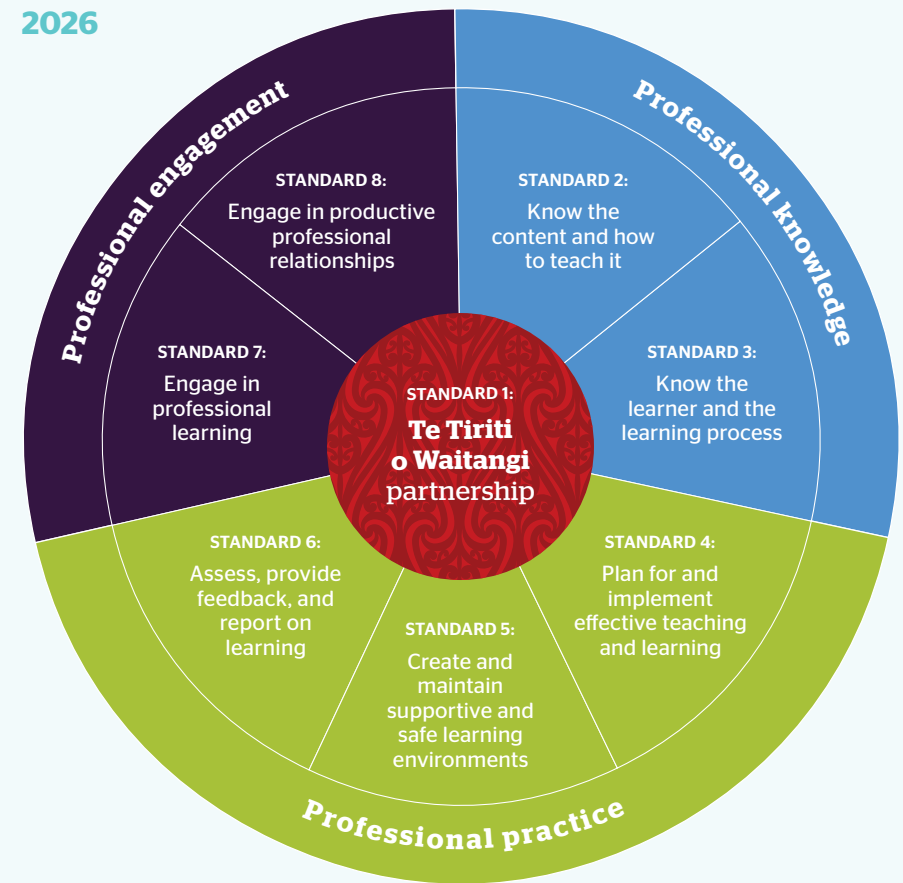
# The two sets of standards at a glance

The 2026 Standards expand the number of standards from six to eight, and group them into domains, but in many respects the basic structure of the set of standards is similar.

2017



2026



# 2026 Standards (including domains and focus area)

A table showing the 2026 Standards (including domains and focus area) on one page.

[Click this link to view an A3 table.](#)

## The 2026 Standards for the Teaching Profession

### Across all domains

#### Standard 1: Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership

Demonstrate commitment to tangata whenuatanga and Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership in Aotearoa New Zealand.

**Focus area 1.1** Understand and recognise the unique status of tangata whenua in Aotearoa New Zealand.

**Focus area 1.2** Understand and acknowledge the histories, heritages, languages, and cultures of partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

**Focus area 1.3** Design teaching and learning experiences that reflect Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership in New Zealand including affirming for all learners the knowledge, identity, language, and culture of te ao Māori and tangata whenuatanga<sup>1</sup>.

**Focus area 1.4** Practise and develop the use of te reo and tikanga Māori, including in support of positive engagement with Māori learners and their whānau and communities.

### Domain: Professional knowledge

#### Standard 2: Know the content and how to teach it

Understand how to design learning based on content, curriculum, and pedagogical knowledge.

#### Standard 3: Know the learner and the learning process

Understand the learning process and the diversity of learners' strengths, needs, languages, cultures, identities, and interests.

**Focus area 2.1** Understand the content  
Demonstrate a developed understanding of the knowledge relevant to the content being taught.

**Focus area 2.2** Understand how to enact the curriculum  
Know how to teach the mandated curriculum<sup>2</sup> and its progressions in learning, effectively and in a way that supports every learner to succeed.

**Focus area 2.3** Understand evidence-informed teaching strategies and practices  
Know how to apply research, evidence, and innovations related to pedagogy, inclusive teaching, and the teaching of particular content.

**Focus area 2.4** Understand how to foster literacy and numeracy as foundational capabilities  
Demonstrate understanding of oral language, literacy, and numeracy as foundational capabilities that are integrated throughout all learning areas and levels, and knowledge of relevant evidence-informed teaching practices that are effective at fostering these proficiencies.

**Focus area 3.1** Understand how learning happens  
Demonstrate a developed knowledge and understanding of the cognitive, emotional, and social factors that affect how children and young people learn, and their application to teaching practice, informed by the science of learning.

**Focus area 3.2** Understand how diverse needs can be met  
Demonstrate understanding of the diverse needs of learners - including those associated with neurodivergence, disabilities, and trauma - and of the learning strategies that can support them, while being willing to seek specialist support where needed.

**Focus area 3.3** Understand culturally responsive teaching  
Demonstrate an understanding of how to richly contextualise teaching and learning experiences to learners' culture, backgrounds, and interests to bring the curriculum to life and help them progress their learning.

**Focus area 3.4** Understand own assumptions and beliefs  
Critically examine how one's own assumptions and beliefs, including cultural beliefs, impact on one's practice, and on the achievement of learners including those with different abilities and needs, backgrounds, genders, identities, languages, and cultures.

### Domain: Professional practice

#### Standard 4: Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning

Plan for learning, teach, and respond to learners during teaching to progress their learning at an appropriate depth and pace.

**Focus area 4.1** Set high expectations  
Set high expectations for the learning outcomes of every learner.

**Focus area 4.2** Prepare learning experiences that are coherent and well organised  
Use a mixture of forward planning and planning in action to ensure that the curriculum is enacted in an intentional way for each learner.

**Focus area 4.3** Advance the progress and achievement of all learners  
Teach in ways that ensure sufficient progress for the diverse range of learners, providing additional support or extension when needed.

**Focus area 4.4** Use and adapt teaching strategies  
Make use of a range of evidence-informed teaching strategies, approaches, and use them adaptively in response to the needs of individuals and groups of learners.

**Focus area 4.5** Enable learning-focused capabilities  
Enable learners to be active participants in their learning, so that they are well placed to develop self-regulation, agency, collaborative capabilities, self-reflection, and critical thinking.

**Focus area 4.6** Māori succeeding as Māori  
Specifically support the educational aspirations for Māori learners, taking shared responsibility for these learners to achieve educational success as Māori.

#### Standard 5: Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

Develop a culture where learners feel safe, have their needs met, and are focussed on learning, with appropriate use of equipment and technologies.

**Focus area 5.1** Support learners to feel safe to participate in learning  
Build genuine, respectful relationships with and among learners so that all learners feel their identities, languages, cultures, and abilities are valued and respected, fostering trust, cooperation, and confidence to participate fully in learning.

**Focus area 5.2** Ensure the learning setting meets diverse needs  
Establish workable routines and learning environments that support different physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development needs to ensure access to learning for all.

**Focus area 5.3** Manage the learning setting and promote positive behaviour  
Develop a shared understanding of positive behaviour, with clear boundaries and a framework for effectively responding to challenging behaviour, including a range of preventative and restorative approaches.

**Focus area 5.4** Use equipment and technologies appropriately and effectively to support learning  
Have strategies in place for any equipment and technologies utilised, including digital devices and artificial intelligence, to be used safely, responsibly, ethically, and in ways that contribute positively to teaching and learning.

#### Standard 6: Assess, provide feedback, and report on learning

Use regular and consistent assessment to inform teaching and share information on learner progress.

**Focus area 6.1** Monitor the extent and pace of learning  
Make effective and regular use of high-quality assessment and/or aromatawai practices to gather, analyse, and use appropriate information about the pace of learners' progress.

**Focus area 6.2** Identify progress and respond to learners' needs  
Use information on learner progress, in relation to goals or outcomes that have been identified, to design clear next steps in learning and identify additional support, extension, or adaptations to teaching practice that may be required.

**Focus area 6.3** Provide constructive and understandable feedback  
Ensure learners (and/or their parents/caregivers and whānau, as appropriate) receive and understand ongoing feedback about their progress, and use this information to enhance their engagement with learning.

**Focus area 6.4** Communicate assessment information  
Communicate clear and accurate information to parents/caregivers and whānau that identifies progress, strengths, and areas for development.

### Domain: Professional engagement

#### Standard 7: Engage in professional learning

Improve professional capability through evidence-based reflection, professional learning, and engagement with colleagues.

**Focus area 7.1** Participate in a continuous cycle of professional growth  
Reflect on the effectiveness of practice in an ongoing way to ensure a cycle of improvement and development, informed by evidence from a range of sources including learner perspectives.

**Focus area 7.2** Undertake professional learning to improve practice  
Participate in professional learning, targeted to identified professional needs and school/service/system priorities, and adaptively apply this learning in practice.

**Focus area 7.3** Engage with colleagues to improve practice  
Invite and respond to feedback from colleagues and other education professionals, collaborate to address challenges, and engage in learning-focused collegial discussions or networks.

#### Standard 8: Engage in productive professional relationships

Work constructively with colleagues, parents/caregivers, and the community to support the learning and wellbeing of each learner.

**Focus area 8.1** Relate effectively with parents/caregivers and whānau  
Build positive, respectful, and culturally appropriate relationships with parents/caregivers and whānau focussed on the learning, engagement, and wellbeing of learners.

**Focus area 8.2** Cooperate in the interests of learners  
Collaborate reciprocally with leaders, teachers, and other colleagues, and engage professionally with external agencies and the wider community, to meet the needs of each learner.

**Focus area 8.3** Actively contribute to the wider educational setting  
Work collegially to support ongoing improvement of organisational culture and practice, showing leadership particularly in areas of responsibility or expertise.

**Focus area 8.4** Communicate effectively  
Use clear, open, and professional oral and written communication that assists everyone to play their part in supporting learning and wellbeing.

<sup>1</sup> Tangata whenuatanga (place-based, socio-cultural awareness and knowledge) is one of the five cultural competencies outlined in *Tātaiako: Cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners* (Education Council and Ministry of Education, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> For teachers in state schools, the mandated curriculum refers to national curriculum statements and foundation curriculum policy statements issued under section 90 of the Act (at the time these standards were approved these statements make up the New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa).

For teachers in early childhood education, the mandated curriculum refers to the early childhood curriculum issued under section 23 of the Act (at the time these standards were approved this is the Te Whāriki curriculum framework).

For teachers in charter schools and private schools, the mandated curriculum refers to the curriculum for teaching, learning, and assessment developed by the school (which is required to meet tuition standards at least equivalent to those at state schools of the same year level).

The Teaching Council acknowledges that Māori medium education may also be undertaken using other curricula including Te Aho Arāki Mārua, Te Marautanga o Te Aho Mārua and Te Marautanga o ngā Kura ā-iwi.

# Six 2017 Standards become eight in 2026

The six standards of the 2017 Standards have been reconfigured to become the eight standards of the 2026 Standards.

## 2017 Standards for the Teaching Profession

- 1. Te Tiriti O Waitangi partnership**  
Demonstrate commitment to tangata whenuatanga and Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- 2. Professional learning**  
Use inquiry, collaborative problem-solving and professional learning to improve professional capability to impact on the learning and achievement of all learners.
- 3. Professional relationships**  
Establish and maintain professional relationships and behaviours focused on the learning and, wellbeing of each learner.
- 4. Learning-focused culture**  
Develop a culture which is focused on learning, and is characterised by respect, inclusion, empathy, collaboration and, safety.
- 5. Design for learning**  
Design learning based on curriculum and pedagogical knowledge, assessment information and an understanding of each learner's strengths, interests, needs, identities, languages and, cultures.
- 6. Teaching**  
Teach and respond to learners in a knowledgeable and adaptive way to progress their learning at an appropriate depth and pace.

## 2026 Standards for the Teaching Profession

- 1. Te Tiriti O Waitangi partnership**  
Demonstrate commitment to tangata whenuatanga and Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- 2. Know the content and how to teach it**  
Design learning based on curriculum and pedagogical knowledge. Understand how to design learning based on content, curriculum, and pedagogical knowledge.
- 3. Know the learner and the learning process**  
Understand the learning process and the diversity of learners' strengths, needs, languages, cultures, identities, and interests.
- 4. Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning**  
Plan for learning, teach, and respond to learners during teaching to progress their learning at an appropriate depth and pace.
- 5. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments**  
Develop a culture where learners feel safe, have their needs met, and are focussed on learning, with appropriate use of equipment and technologies.
- 6. Assess, provide feedback, and report on learning**  
Use regular and consistent assessment to inform teaching and share information on learner progress.
- 7. Engage in professional learning**  
Improve professional capability through evidence-based reflection, professional learning, and engagement with colleagues.
- 8. Engage in productive professional relationships**  
Work constructively with colleagues, parents/caregivers, and the community to support the learning and wellbeing of each learner.

# Similarities and differences for each standard

Standards 4, 7 and 8 are substantively the same as their 2017 equivalents.



**2017.2** Professional learning

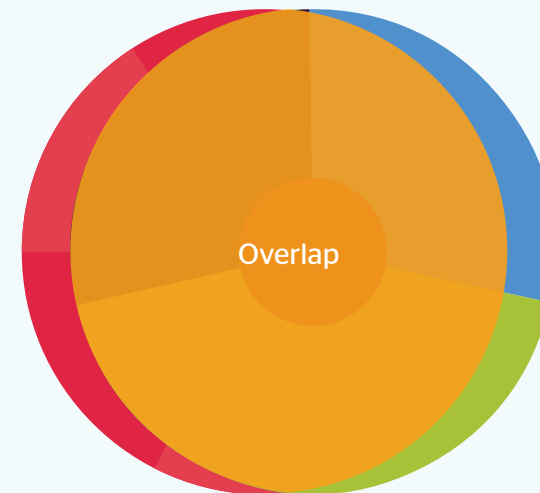
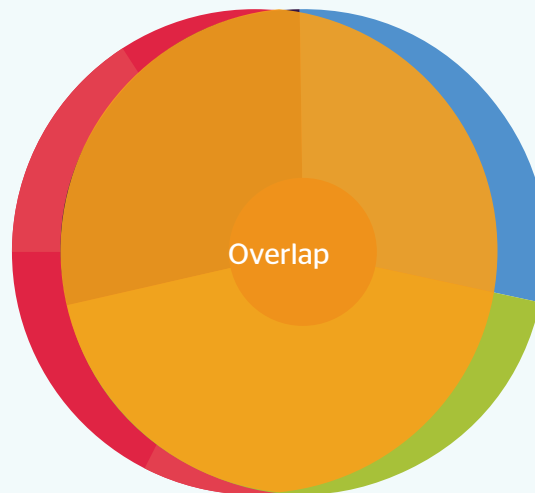
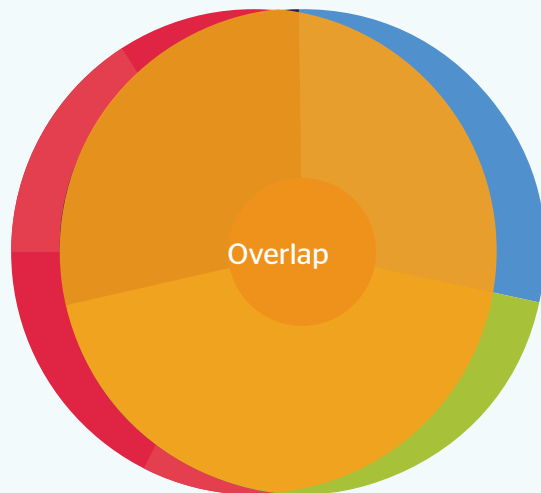
**2026.7** Engage in professional learning

**2017.3** Professional relationships

**2026.8** Engage in productive professional relationships

**2017.6** Teaching

**2026.4** Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning

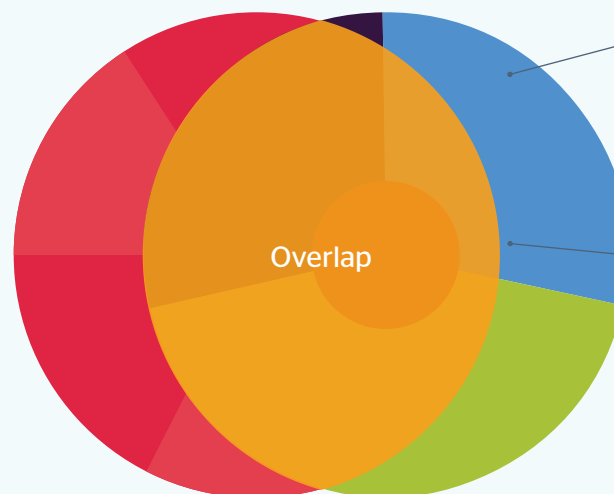


Standard 1 has some new elements but these do reflect 2017 elaborations to other standards.



**2017.1** Te Tiriti O Waitangi partnership

**2026.1** Te Tiriti O Waitangi partnership



**Focus area 1.3** Design teaching and learning experiences that reflect Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership in New Zealand including affirming for all learners the knowledge, identity, language, and culture of te ao Māori and tangata whenuatanga.

Part of **Focus area 1.4** ...including in support of positive engagement with Māori learners and their whānau and communities.



Much of Standard 5 parallels 2017 but two focus areas are largely new.

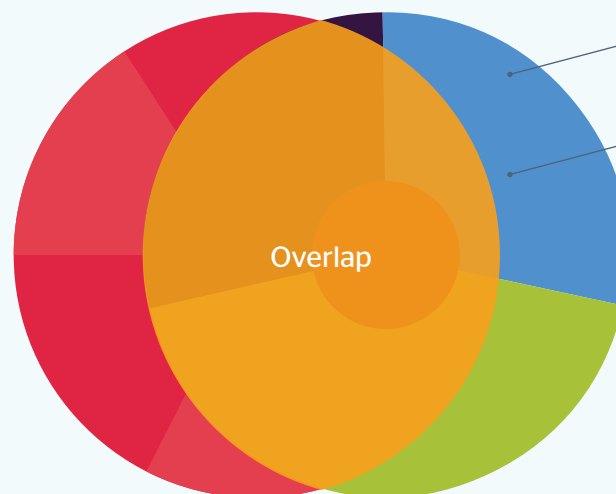


**2017.4** Learning focused culture

**2026.5** Create and maintain supportive and learning environments

**Focus area 5.3** Manage the learning setting and promote positive behavior.

**Focus area 5.4** Use equipment and technologies appropriately and effectively to support learning.



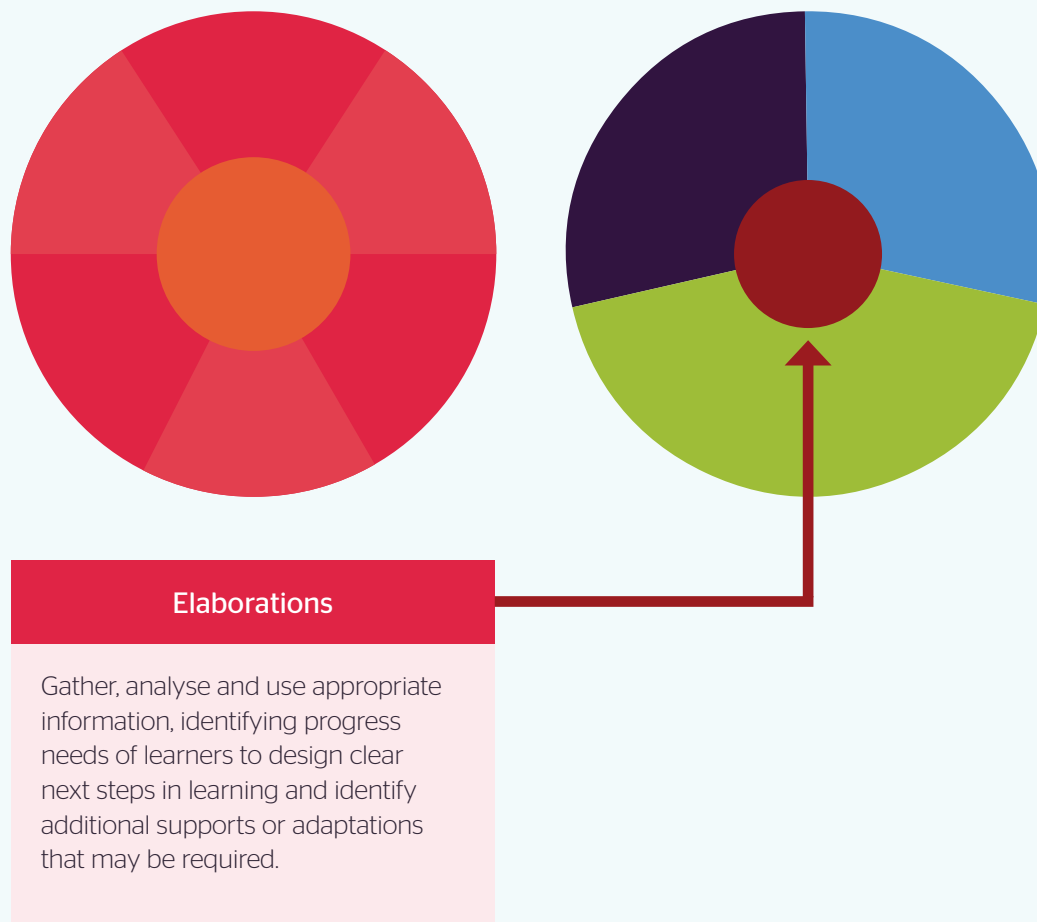
All of Standard 6 reflects 2017 'Design for Learning', but largely at the elaboration level.



## 2017.5 Design for learning

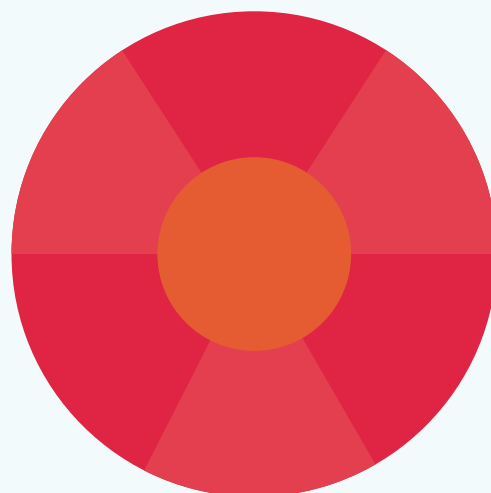
Design learning based on curriculum and pedagogical knowledge, assessment information, and understanding each learner's strengths, interests, needs, identities, languages and cultures.

## 2026.6 Assess, provide feedback, and report and learning



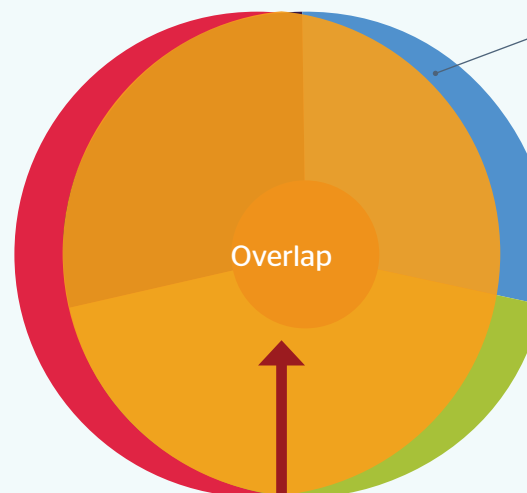
## 2017.5 Design for learning

Design learning based on curriculum and pedagogical knowledge, assessment information, and understanding each learner's strengths, interests, needs, identities, languages and cultures.



## 2026.2 Know the content and how to teach it

**Focus area 2.4** Understand how to foster literacy and numeracy as foundational capabilities.



### Elaborations

Select teaching approaches, resources, and learning and assessment activities based on a thorough knowledge of curriculum content, pedagogy, progressions in learning and the learners.

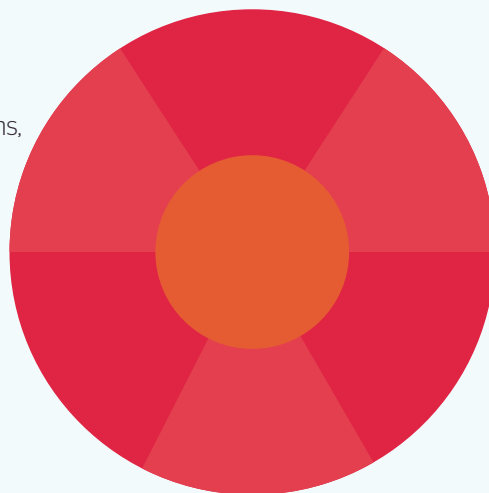
In the 2017 Standards this aspect is framed in terms of '*design learning based on*' these things whereas in the 2026 Standard demonstrating content knowledge is more directly an aspect of the Standards.

To some extent Standard 3 itself and, in particular, its first two focus areas are largely new



## 2017.5 Design for learning

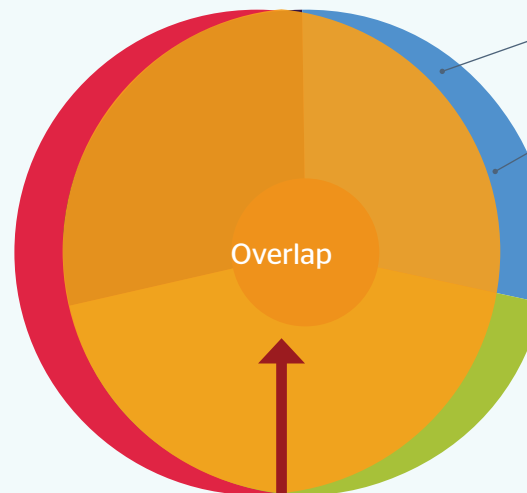
Design learning based on curriculum and pedagogical knowledge, assessment information, and understanding each learner's strengths, interests, needs, identities, languages and cultures.



## 2026.3 Know the content and how to teach it

**Focus area 3.1** Understand how learning happens.

**Focus area 3.2** Understand how diverse needs can be met.



### Elaborations

Design and plan culturally responsive, evidence-based approaches which reflect the local community...

Harness the rich capital that learners bring by providing culturally responsive and engaging contexts for learners.



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