

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - Fees consultation 2020

Did the Council consider cutting costs instead of raising fees?

The Council has carefully considered a range of options including reducing operating costs. Fees have not increased since 2010 and only cover around 40% of the Teaching Council's operating costs.

However, don't get us wrong, the Council has taken steps (such as the introduction of online applications) to reduce costs borne by the profession.

No final decision on the proposed increase will be made until teachers have been consulted and their views considered with an open mind.

What value does the Council add to me as a teacher?

What does the money really go towards? What do the fees give us?

The Teaching Council provides a range of benefits and resources for teachers and professional leaders to collectively impact and shape the future of learning and teaching. By providing high standards for ethical behaviour and effective teaching practice, the Council enhances the status of the profession and increases public trust and confidence in teachers.

In practical terms the fees provide a range of benefits, including:

- *Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession*
- New Initial Teacher Education programme design
- Hapori Matatū | Online communities (general availability coming soon)
- Induction and mentoring programmes
- *Tapasā* cultural competency workshops and PLD for teachers of Pacific learners
- Unteach racism in education campaign (also coming soon)
- Advocacy & research on key issues affecting education and teachers like legislative changes to physical restraint that work for teachers on an everyday basis
- Appraisal redesign, and many others

Being strong and financially independent will allow the Teaching Council to speak up on the issues that most affect the teaching profession, and to work in the best interests of children, young people and teachers.



We went through a fee consult a couple of years ago, why are we doing it again?

Long story short: The formerly named Education Council consulted on the introduction of new fees and fee increases back in April 2017 and considered the feedback over the course of several subsequent meetings.

In September 2017 the Council agreed a new fees regime and were ready to announce new fees. However, due to the initially unclear outcome of the September 2017 general election, the Council subsequently decided to defer making an announcement at that time until they had spoken to the new Minister of Education about funding.

Then, in November 2017, the new Minister of Education announced a review of Tomorrow's Schools including a review of the roles and functions of education sector entities such as the Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand. Considering this announcement, the Council decided in February 2018 to put any decision on fees on hold until the functions of the Council were confirmed as this could impact on the level of fee income required.

With the outcomes of the Tomorrow's Schools review now announced, we have decided that we can't just rely on the previous consultation process undertaken three years ago, and have new proposals for fees to consult the teaching profession on.

Why don't we pay our fees to the Ministry of Education?

The Teaching Council was set up to be an independent statutory body, separate from government and from the Ministry of Education.

Being strong and financially independent will allow the Teaching Council to speak up on the issues that most affect the teaching profession, and to work in the best interests of children, young people and teachers.

Why can't the increases be staggered over time, to make it easier to pay?

The option to stagger the increase over a longer period of time was explicitly considered by the Board.

After careful consideration, it was decided not to consult with this option as the detailed financial analysis showed it did not have sufficient reserves to support a staggered approach without the risk of becoming insolvent.

What is the professional responsibility levy?

I've never used the professional responsibility service, why can't we remove the \$135 levy, and only pay it if we need to use it?

Annually the Council receives around 1 complaint or mandatory report in relation to teacher conduct or competence for every 163 teachers holding practising certificates.

While the number of complaints represents only around 0.6% of all teachers holding practising certificates, the costs associated with operating the mandated conduct and disciplinary processes under the current legislation and [Teaching Council Rules 2016](#) are significant at nearly 30% of the



Council's total annual operating budget.

The proposed Professional Responsibility Levy represents the actual pro-rata costs per teacher to operate the current conduct and disciplinary processes.

It is not possible to have only those teachers engaged in a conduct or competency process fund the process and we believe that all teachers benefit from having effective disciplinary processes that maintain public trust and confidence in teachers and through this enhance the status of the profession.

It is also the responsibility of all teachers and education leaders to ensure a safe and high-quality education system. Therefore, one way to reduce the costs, is to reduce the number of cases, through the profession managing situations before they meet the threshold for serious misconduct.

The Teaching Council is currently undertaking work to review the reasonableness of the current threshold for serious misconduct under the legislation and Teaching Council Rules in case law reform is needed. If the current threshold was to change or where the costs associated with the Teaching Council's Professional Responsibility functions were to materially reduce, we would seek to transparently pass those savings on to teachers through a reduction in fees in subsequent years.

Why are the conduct and competence costs so high at \$8.4 million per year?

The Teaching Council's statutory disciplinary role in teacher misconduct is vital to both protecting the safety of children and the reputation of the teaching profession.

Over the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2019, the Teaching Council received:

- 1,878 cases that were either resolved without investigation by triage process (419 cases) or were referred for formal investigation (1,459 cases);
- 980 cases requiring investigation that related to conduct;
- 479 cases requiring investigation that related to competence; and
- 241 cases were referred to the Disciplinary Tribunal – 45 in the year ended 30 June 2017, 51 in the year ended 30 June 2018 and 155 in the year ended 30 June 2019.

We believe that teaching professionals collectively have the greatest ability to influence positive changes in regard to conduct and competence matters within the teaching professional.

In 2020 we are planning a series of workshops to help teachers understand some of the key trends in professional responsibility cases, and to share lessons learnt and guidance to avoid common issues before they arise.



Will the fee keep going up, or is this it for another ten years? Are you adding in more increases for inflation?

If the Board does decide to increase fees, to avoid a future situation where another large increase is proposed we are signalling annual increases to reflect inflationary cost pressures of around 2.3% per annum.

Future fees could also be reduced if we could reduce our costs, for example through the Professional Responsibility Levy.

When would I have to pay the new fee?

If the Board decided to increase the fee, you would have to pay the new fee when you next apply for re-certification after 1 July 2020. As this is done in a three-year cycle, if any increase came into effect, it might be up to three years away if you've just been renewed.

Why doesn't the government give the Council more funding?

Government has provided nearly \$40 million in funding since 2016 on the basis that it expects the Teaching Council, as the professional body for the teaching profession to be independently financially sustainable by 01 July 2020.

After legislative change in 2018 that saw the appointment of elected members to the Council's governing body from 1 July 2019, Council sees this as an opportunity to be totally independent so that it can speak up on the issues that most affect the teaching profession, and to work in the best interests of children, young people, families/whānau, and teachers.

Why is the Council consulting so early in the new year?

We acknowledge that the timing isn't ideal, but it's necessary in order to ensure there is a clear outcome by 01 July 2020.

Can I disagree with both options in the online survey?

If you don't agree with either option, or want to suggest an alternative, you can provide that feedback together with your rationale in the comments section of the online feedback survey.

Will the Council publish the results of the consultation?

Yes, once the consultation process is over and all the results have been collated, we'll definitely be reporting back to teachers on the survey and you'll see the results of they survey.



This doesn't feel like a consultation, after all where's the box, for 'no fee's increase?'

If you disagree with both options proposed, please say so in the survey. Any practicable alternate options to increasing fees that are provided via the feedback process will be carefully considered.

I don't agree with all these other benefits, why don't you just carry out your statutory functions and leave the rest to others?

You may not make use of many or all the benefits but as your membership organisation it is our responsibility to carry out our functions under law. Some of these may not be as visible in your everyday work, but there is benefit, such as our work lobbying to Government in the area of physical restraint in schools.

Why can't I pay my fees in instalments - that would make it easier for me to do?

Under the law, all fees need to be paid in full before a practising certificate can be issued.

This means we can't legally issue part of a practising certificate in return for part-payment in arrears.

We also don't have the capability to take part payments in advance of when the full amount is due, but your employer or bank might be able to help in this regard.

Are our fees comparable to overseas fees? What are overseas teachers charged?

To ensure any proposed increase is well considered, fees from a range of relevant New Zealand professional bodies and Australian teacher registration bodies were looked at. The detail on those comparisons is in the full consultation document which is available on our website.

If I applied now for my renewal, even though my certificate doesn't expire until later in 2020, can I do so and pay the current fees?

Teachers are able to apply to renew their current practising certificate up to 3 months in advance.

If the Board did move to change fees, this means some teachers will be able to renew early at the current rate.

Is it likely, or are we expecting a decrease or increase in teacher numbers that will or could affect the fees charged?

There are many factors which impact on teacher supply, with fees being just one consideration.

Overall the trend over the last three years has been growth in the number of teachers holding practising certificates and we expect this trend to continue, despite the higher fees proposed.



Why didn't you prepare for this earlier, you knew Government funding was coming to an end?

We acknowledge that the proposed size of any increase is large and isn't helped by the fact that the current fees have been unchanged since 2010 despite significant increases to the Council's functions and delivery of additional benefits and services to teachers.

The increase being consulted on is the minimum amount required for the Teaching Council to carry out its functions and statutory obligations under the law.

Can I speak to someone about the proposals and give my feedback in person?

Yes. During the consultation period the Chief Executive or one of the other senior managers, or Council members would be happy to come and present the proposals to any key stakeholder group in person and to hear your feedback in person too.

Could the proposed fees be charged out so that those that do not register in time or require conduct and competence support are charged separately and therefore overall could reduce the general practising certificate fees?

Under the law, all fees need to be paid in full before a practising certificate can be issued.

This means we can't legally separate these kinds of fees upfront.

Teachers engaged in the disciplinary processes do contribute to the costs of those processes (where a complaint or mandatory report is proven), and this is factored into the proposed professional Responsibility Levy.

Will the Council be going out and talking about this to interested groups?

During the consultation period the Teaching Council would be happy to meet with interested groups to present the proposals and receive feedback.

Does the governing body of the Teaching Council have the final say on the increase?

Yes. The Board, made up of elected members of the profession and appointees, will make a final decision in late April after carefully considering all the feedback.

How will we be notified about the outcome?

We expect to communicate with all teachers on the outcome of the consultation process, the final decisions and rationale in May 2020.



Were there any other options considered, besides a fee increase?

Yes. The Council is carefully considering a range of options including reducing operating costs.

With current fees being unchanged since 2010 despite significant increases to the Council's functions and delivery of additional benefits and services to teachers, the proposed increase is the minimum amount required for the Teaching Council to carry out its functions and statutory obligations under the law.

Where can I get more information on what's proposed?

See our website (<https://teachingcouncil.nz/content/fees-consultation>) to get a copy of the full consultation document.

How do I provide feedback?

We've sent an email to over 105,000 teachers with the details of what's proposed. If you received that email, click on the link that says 'Have your say' to complete our online feedback survey.

If you didn't receive our email, see our website (<https://teachingcouncil.nz/content/fees-consultation>) to access the online feedback survey.

I want to provide written feedback.

If you're not wanting to provide feedback via our online survey, download a copy of the full consultation document from our website (<https://teachingcouncil.nz/content/fees-consultation>) and use the template in Appendix 4 to send us your written feedback.

If you can't download or print the written feedback template, please call us on +64 (0) 4 471 0852 and we can organise to send you out a paper copy.

Do you have copies available in Te Reo?

Yes. We have a copy of the consultation document and email sent to teachers available in Te Reo, and the online feedback survey is available in Te Reo too.

I can't provide feedback by 21 February; can I have more time?

The online feedback survey is quick and easy to complete so we would encourage you to find 10 minutes to tell us what you think.

If you really can't do this before 5pm on 21 February, please email feedback@teachingcouncil.nz telling us why you need an extension and how much longer you need.



Where am I going to find the money to pay these fees?

While \$470 or \$500 might feel like a lot of money to find every three years, if the Board moves to increase fees based on these proposed options, on a weekly basis it equates to \$3.00 or \$3.19 per week, which is an increase of around \$1.60 a week.

Why are you proposing to eliminate the Fees Rebate? That just seems unfair.

The existing fees rebate isn't claimed by all that many teachers who are eligible to claim it, and the new practising certificate they receive under the current arrangement has same expiry date as their original certificate – which sometimes means they have to pay to renew again in just a few weeks or months.

We're proposing to eliminate the rebate because its costly to administer and ensure that when teachers upgrade from provisional to full practising certificates, they do not need to renew again until the full three years are up.

