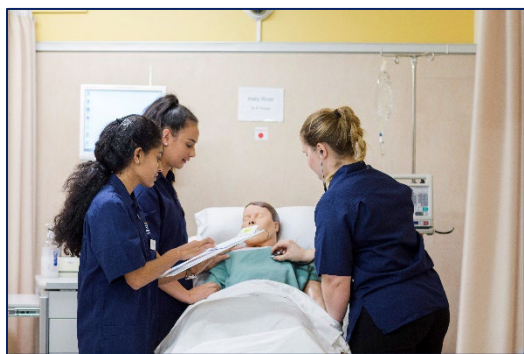


Educating the nurse of the future in Aotearoa New Zealand



PROJECT BRIEF



Executive summary

The Nursing Council of New Zealand (the Council) has a legislative responsibility to ensure that New Zealand's nursing education model remains fit for purpose and is effectively able to address challenges and respond to ongoing change. The last major reform of nursing education in New Zealand was in 1970.

There have been significant changes to nursing education over the last 50 years. These changes have resulted in considerable disruption, however this disruption has also provided new opportunities for reconsidering planning and delivery of nursing education. The changes include a wide range of social, cultural, financial, education and health sector changes which challenge nursing education programmes to continue to deliver in the current context.

As responding to these challenges and opportunities is already causing pressure for change, this is the ideal time to undertake a significant strategic review of how nursing education should be shaped, supported and delivered in future.

This Project Brief outlines an independent strategic review being undertaken to look at current models, risks, challenges and opportunities, and to propose and test future models for nursing education.

Context

Who is the Nursing Council of New Zealand?

The Nursing Council of New Zealand (the Council) is the regulatory authority responsible for the registration of nurses to practice in New Zealand under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003.

The Council's primary function is to protect the health and safety of members of the public by ensuring that nurses are competent and fit to practice. It fulfils this function by:

- registering (licencing) nurses;
- setting ongoing competence requirements and issuing practising certificates (licences);
- setting scopes of practice and the qualifications required for registration;
- accrediting and monitoring education providers and managing the state examination for New Zealand-educated nurses;
- setting the requirements for internationally qualified nurses (IQNs) to register to practice in New Zealand and managing the related assessment processes;
- developing standards for education and competence;
- receiving and acting on notifications of health and competence concerns;
- receiving and acting on complaints about the conduct of nurses.



The Council also has an obligation to work with Māori to ensure te Tiriti o Waitangi is central to nursing education and practice.

The Council regulates:

- 85,462 nurses with annual practising certificates:
 - 2,459 Enrolled Nurses
 - 82,106 Registered Nurses
 - 897 Nurse Practitioners
- 22 accredited providers of pre-registration nursing programmes
 - 13 Te Pūkenga business units
 - 7 universities
 - 1 private provider
 - 1 wānanga
- Graduates from undergraduate New Zealand nursing programmes:
 - Registered nurses: 2,263
 - Enrolled nurses: 269

Why the review

To ensure the continuation of the preparation of safe and competent nurses to meet the health needs of the population.

- the ongoing changes to health delivery across the country including to the structural organisation of health delivery, health funding, changing roles and responsibilities, location and modes of delivery.
- greater understanding of health needs and outcomes based on evidence research allowing local and more targeted health interventions.
- major and rapid increase in the development and use of technology including AI and Virtual Reality, which is now fundamental in education and clinical practice.
- increased mobility of the health workforce and fiscal and workforce sustainability challenges.
- there is an increased commitment to ensuring te Tiriti o Waitangi is central to health and health outcomes.
- New Zealand population demographics have changed significantly, including an ageing population and greater diversity of ethnicity.
- degree qualifications for entry to the register has increased the expectations and necessity for tertiary education providers to attract and retain staff with higher levels of academic qualifications and expertise.
- tertiary education is experiencing serious financial challenges across most of the sector.



- the organisation of vocational education provided by Te Pūkenga continues to undergo significant changes and restructuring of the ITPs.
- robust research is required to support the development of the discipline of nursing.

These factors are having an ongoing significant impact on both current nursing programmes and the providers delivering them, and on ensuring a stable environment within which innovation and future change can occur. The ability of each individual provider to lead, develop and support unique education programmes which are sustainable, can deliver the required quality, and can respond to change as it occurs, is uncertain. There is also the potential for a two-tier system to emerge, with the Polytechnic and University sectors taking potentially divergent approaches to nursing education.

The Council has a legislative responsibility to ensure that New Zealand’s nursing education remains fit for purpose and is effectively able to address challenges and respond to ongoing change. The Council sees this as the ideal opportunity to exercise this responsibility by working with all interested parties to identify and test future models of nursing education to address these challenges and opportunities in a way that will continue to deliver high-quality, well-educated nurses for New Zealand. As the regulator, the Council’s independence from both educators and employers makes it ideally placed to lead this work.

Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora (TWO) Health Workforce Plan 2024¹

The TWO Health Workforce Plan lays out five workforce priorities for the 2024-2027 period which identify their most important areas to work on in order to make sufficient progress towards workforce sustainability. These include several that relate directly to tertiary education programmes:

- match tertiary training capacity to future need - review all health system training volumes against models of expected workforce demand by 2035 and outline required tertiary training growth to meet demand.
- streamline tertiary training programmes - redesign tertiary training pathways to align training times to global norms, introduce more flexible pathways, and address student attraction and attrition.
- improve student placements - launch a new system for student placements to coordinate capacity nationwide and better allow students to indicate placement preferences (including where and when they are placed).

¹ Published December 2024, Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora website: [Health Workforce Plan 2024 – Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora](#)



- support nurses to make more use of their scope, and support specialisation in areas where we have growing demand.
- enable more nurses to be used to their potential in the community – including in general practices, and as part of ambulatory care teams.

As yet it is unclear how TWO intends to implement these changes.

The review

The purpose of this review is to develop a future vision and sustainable blueprint for nursing education in New Zealand to ensure a safe and competent nursing workforce for the future.

This will require:

- working closely with Māori to ensure their perspective is appropriately captured throughout all parts of the Review process;
- face-to-face discussion with a wide variety of providers of nursing education in New Zealand, both to gather information and to collaborate on developing and testing potential future options;
- discussion with a range of health sector employers across both public and private sectors, to understand their expectations of future nursing education and identify trends/likely changes in health care delivery (e.g. increasing community-based or technology-based care delivery);
- communication with central government health/education policy makers regarding potential ongoing change to the health sector, understanding the relationship (if any) of national nursing workforce strategies/plans to nursing education models;
- review of major trends in international nursing and allied education and funding, including possible in-depth discussion with a small number of providers.

The Review will work with the education and service sectors to develop a ten-year blueprint that will flexibly support education leading to registration/endorsement of the nursing workforce that New Zealand will require.

Areas this review may address (not in order of importance, and not restricted to this list):

- poutama and staircase models of nursing education and the interconnectedness of scopes and preparation.
- the overall impact of the disestablishment of Te Pūkenga.
- the intersection between ITP and University nursing education.
- links to employers including pathways into employment, levels of influence over content and delivery.



- how to support agile responses to rapidly changing and challenged systems of health care delivery (regulation) and working environments.
- bespoke models of education and education delivery at sites such as rural and marae-based settings, areas of high need, and for specific groups in the community (e.g. Pacific);
- the appropriate number of nursing qualifications for New Zealand.
- the role of new technology to drive changed approaches to academic and clinical learning.
- models of clinical learning and skills.
- collaborative models with other disciplines and between education providers.
- leadership of nursing education programmes.
- preparation and retention of the nursing education workforce
- how the transition from a clinical role to an academic role can be supported to ensure the nursing education sector has a suitable academic workforce going forward.
- understanding of the need to undertake research and scholarly activity to extend the knowledge of the discipline.
- how to ensure and measure quality outcomes.
- collaboration for the future vision of nursing education.

