

## Aide-Memoire: Regulatory bodies' responses to COVID-19 in relation to managing work placements

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<b>To:</b>	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education
<b>From:</b>	Dr Grant Klinkum, Chief Executive
<b>Date:</b>	19 June 2020
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### Purpose

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1. This aide-memoire provides you with a summary how key regulatory bodies have responded to the impact of COVID-19 on the ability of graduates to meet registration criteria.
2. NZQA proposes to proactively release this briefing as part of the next publication of documents.

### Background

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3. Students enrolled in programmes such as teaching, nursing and midwifery are required to complete specified work placement experience, often expressed as numbers of hours, to meet professional registration criteria.
4. During the lockdown in response to COVID-19, many work placements could not be accessed, potentially leading to some students being unable to meet their programme and hence registration requirements.
5. NZQA facilitated a meeting on 28 May 2020 with representatives from six regulatory bodies<sup>1</sup> to gain an understanding of how regulatory bodies were supporting education organisations and students to meet the registration requirements for their chosen professions.

### Discussion

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6. It was apparent the regulatory bodies had engaged early and deeply with providers, sector representatives and government agencies to understand and address the extent of the disruption which led to a range of innovative practices.

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<sup>1</sup> NZQA has Memoranda of Understanding with the following five of the six attendees. The Midwifery Council of New Zealand, Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand, Nursing Council of New Zealand, Social Workers Registration Board New Zealand and Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand. The Dieticians Board of New Zealand also attended.

7. Both the Teaching Council and Social Workers Registration Board have made temporary changes to their registration criteria.
8. The Teaching Council has reduced the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) practical experience requirements by 25 per cent for all ITE students whose final year of study has been disrupted, as well as other temporary changes which allow providers more flexibility in arranging work placements. This includes removing the requirement for student teachers to undertake a practicum at an 'away' school or centre. To offset the reduction in practical experience, the Teaching Council and Ministry of Education are working to offer enhanced induction and mentoring for affected beginning teachers.
9. The Social Workers Registration Board have temporarily relaxed requirements for work placements. For example, students are now able to undertake two of their required placements at their current place of work, although these must be in different parts of the organisation. Previously they could only undertake one in their workplace.
10. Other regulatory bodies have worked with providers to address disruptions by rescheduling practical elements of their programmes (in most cases pushing back work placements and bringing forward theory learning). The Occupational Therapy Board decided not to reduce work placement hours as they are bound not only by own their accreditation standards which require 1000 hours of practical experience, but also standards which allow for international recognition of their qualification. The Dieticians Council have allowed students to continue their practice experience at home by conducting consultations with clients via video conferencing.
11. Some regulatory bodies have introduced extra support for students, for example, the Nursing Council added two extra State Final Examination dates for students who may be affected by delays to their final placement. Several of the regulatory bodies have rescheduled provider accreditation/recognition processes or extended credit reporting guidelines to remove pressure on providers.
12. The regulatory bodies expect that the arrangements and supports put in place and with providers, should enable these students to meet the graduate profile for their qualifications and graduate as expected. They continue to keep a watching brief on the evolving situation.

## Next steps

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13. NZQA is confident that the measures registration bodies have taken are both appropriate and sufficient at this point to manage the risks and challenges presented by COVID-19 in relation to work placements and will continue to monitor this issue as the year progresses.



**Dr Grant Klinkum**  
Chief Executive

19 June 2020



**Hon Chris Hipkins**  
Minister of Education

30 / 08 / 20