Teaching Council Interim Monitoring Evaluation Report 2021-2022

Report Date: June 2023

Report Purpose:

The dual purpose of this report is to:

- evaluate the overall functioning of ITE programmes that have been monitored post-approval against the 2019 ITE Requirements.
- supply analysis of Interim Monitoring's value to providers and the Council, as it is currently configured.

This report should be read in conjunction with:

1. 2023 Draft Interim Monitoring Guide
2. Pre-Monitoring Provider Self Assessment Template

Background

Initial teacher education (ITE) programme monitoring has been a vital and well-accepted quality assurance process within ITE for many years. The release of the 2019 ITE Programme Approval, Monitoring and Review Requirements (ITE Requirements) in mid-2019 also signalled an intention for Matatū Aotearoa |Teaching Council (Council) to re-evaluate monitoring processes aligned with the new requirements.

Monitoring of programmes happens annually in the first three years of a programme being taught. It is intended to provide assurance that programmes are being taught as approved, that they are enabled to function through their organisational structures and that student outcomes are being met and students are safe and well supported.

The COVID-19 pandemic enforced multiple lockdowns in Aotearoa New Zealand, preventing many normal ITE processes from occurring, programme monitoring being one of these. NZQA and Council agreed to postpone many of the scheduled initial monitoring visits due in 2020/21 as a result.

In 2022 the Council begun work with the ITE Advisory Group (ITEAG) with the intention of scoping and designing a new approach to programme quality assurance that meets the needs of providers, the profession, and reflects the vision of the 2019 ITE Requirements.   As a new monitoring process

was being negotiated through a partnership approach, an interim process was put in place. 'Interim Monitoring' is the term given to the temporary programme monitoring process implemented in late 2021 and until the time when the permanent replacement monitoring model is developed, refined and socialised, likely late 2023.

For NZQA providers a joint interim monitoring process involves an external monitor, usually a member of the original approval panel, NZQA evaluator and the Provider Lead Advisor from the Council. This enables the provider to meet both NZQA and Teaching Council expectations within one event, saving considerable duplication of information and time for staff and partners. For universities, Interim Monitoring is performed by Council staff alone based on information provided from their internal review of programmes.

Providers who received Interim Monitoring 2021/2022

Between late 2021 and the end of 2022 nine ITE providers collaborated with the Council to undertake Interim Monitoring.

- Nine monitoring visits were undertaken during this period
- Visits involved five Universities, three Private Tertiary Education (PTE) and one Polytechnic.
- Monitoring was undertaken for between 1-6 programmes at a time

Provider reaction to Interim Monitoring

As described in the providers pre-monitoring evaluation form, the focus of the interim monitoring has been three-fold:

1. Quality Assurance – a light 'check-in' to see that programmes are being delivered as approved
2. Critical Friendship/Evaluation – how are things going, is the programme being received as expected, what road bumps have been hit, any planned future changes, private check in with providers' partners and students/graduates, follow up on any panel recommendations.
3. Learning for the Council regarding how the 2019 ITE Programme Approval, Monitoring and Review Requirements have 'landed'

Providers are familiar with the monitoring expectations for programmes, they were supportive of the Council in their endeavours to explore what monitoring would look like in response to the introduction of the new Requirements and as a result were supportive of interim monitoring.

Focus areas for Interim Monitoring

The focus areas for monitoring from a Council perspective were in relation to the significant changes implemented with the Requirements;

- Embeddedness of Code and Standards within programmes and assessments
- Application of Key Teaching Tasks and CIA (where it had been applied in 1 yr programmes)
- Authentic Partnerships
- Te reo Māori progression within the programmes for students
- Any significant changes made to programmes
- Following up on any conditions or suggestions made at panel

Trends apparent in Interim Monitoring in relation to Focus Areas

Overall, the most apparent trend in Interim Monitoring is the overall success and stability of the new programmes. Although each provider and individual programmes all have suffered complications or challenges of some kind, the programmes overall appear to be meeting the intent and vision of the 2019 Requirements. Almost all of the innovations within the 2019 Requirements appeared to have been embraced by providers and are now featuring as strong aspects of programmes.

Requirement 1.1 - Meeting the Standards

Code and Standards Strong connections between Code and Standards and the programme content, assessment tasks visible to both students and their Associate Teachers in Professional Experience Placements. Enabling deep reflective conversations tying these to their practice for students within schools and centres.

Requirement 1.3 - Authentic Partnerships

Partnerships have continued to grow and develop despite the challenges of COVID 19 impacts, many have been strengthened in this period through online engagement and continual connection with students and associates within the sector.

While many Providers signalled that they have existing strategic relationship with Runanga and iwi education organisations, these are often at a high level and not directly impacting on the day-to-day teaching considerations. Several providers have made inroads into developing operational relationships with relevant iwi and Runanga, particularly focussed on understanding and developing localised content and supporting with specific teaching in relation to te reo Māori. For many providers these relationships are at the early stages and still focussed on relationship building. For those who have purposefully engaged with iwi, hapū and whānau from the initial design phase this has seen a positive and reciprocal relationship develop, providing ongoing support and guidance to the programme.

Similarly in the development of relationships with Pacific People's representatives and organisations, many of the existing relationships within programmes are based on familial or collegial connections and opportunities to extend these have been hindered by the Covid situation. It is anticipated by providers that they will be able to grow these networks in authentic ways over the next few years as opportunities to explore appropriate fora for participation and engagement eventuate.

ITE providers with national reach inevitably have faced challenges when working to develop strong local partnerships with all the areas their students serve. COVID over 2020-2022 led many schools/kura/centres to restrict their places for professional experience placements. This has led to increased competition for already limited placement opportunities, and for providers to go beyond their traditional geographical territories. Smaller providers who have more modest geographical reach have increasingly felt the pressure of other providers moving into their traditional territory.

Feedback provided from Schools and Early Childhood Education Centre teachers and leaders largely has been positive. Recognition of the challenges faced and the ongoing impact of teacher workload has highlighted the additional expectations placed on an associate or mentor teacher. Associate teachers in the main reported clear communication, availability of ITE staff and their willingness to participate in conversations regarding decision making and assessment for students through a triadic process.

Associate teachers regularly raise the issue of renumeration and workload, both of which sit outside the remit of the Teaching Council and NZQA/CUAP but impact on the teaching profession and their willingness to take a student teacher into their class.

Requirement 6.2 - Te Reo Māori programme and assessment(s)

Overall, this Requirement has been well-embraced by the ITE community, who clearly understand the vision and intent behind its inclusion in the 2019 ITE Requirements. Many graduates and students spoke affirmingly of their satisfaction in building competence with te reo Māori, and the confidence which that growth offered them in their classroom practice. Similarly, though, some of these same people suggested that their provider's implementation had gaps or inconsistencies, which created challenges or frustrations for students. A common disappointment heard from students and graduates was that the programme was considerably biased towards 'self-study', when they in fact wished to have skilled staff or tutors to work alongside and practice their language with. These issues had been raised with the providers through their feedback loops and opportunities for developing further were being considered.

This approach of 'self-study' by many providers appears to have been often driven by the resource limitations experienced by providers whose staff have often been developing te reo Māori expertise in parallel with the students; transferring responsibility of the tuition to students has apparently been an attempt by the provider to fulfil the expectations of this Requirement without multiple reo-proficient staff to support the students. ITE providers stated that their staff hiring intentions for 2023 and beyond will attempt to assist rectifying this resourcing issue over time. Providers appear to be very open to modifying and optimising their approaches to this Requirement further in 2023, and several have requested that this topic is repeated in 2023 as an ITE symposium focus.

Students largely appear to be pleased to be able to test their emerging skills in te reo Māori in their practice sites, but reasonably often these students report that their host skill has modest expectations for staff to practice te reo Māori, which somewhat has undermined student enthusiasm – the 'flip' side of this is that these same student-teachers have been able to display leadership opportunities in te reo Māori usage in their host schools among experienced staff.

Feedback on the impact of the inclusion of te reo Māori within programme content was visible in a number of programme monitoring visits with schools and early childhood centre leaders commenting that they had been asked to provide additional learning for their teachers to ensure they could keep up with the student teachers, one school putting all their staff members through a te reo Māori course to support them in response.

Requirement 4.3 - Key Teaching Tasks (KTT)

This new assessment has overall been well-received by ITE providers, principally as an outcome of the assessment's positive reception from the profession. During the development of the new programmes, the need for agreement upon the KTTs were a principal reason for partnership consultation and from that point onwards the KTTs have possibly represented the aspect of the new Requirements which the profession most easily identify with.

The KTT's also constitute the assessment which underwent the most immediate revisions once new programme operation began: gaps, oversights or inconsistencies in the KTTs quickly became evident by partners, students and visiting lecturers, which in turn led to those revisions. An almost universal change to KTTs by providers post-approval has been the adoption of 'KTT indicators'; at approval, most or all providers complied lists of 10-20 KTTs but these simple lists often proved hard for

partners and students to operationalise. In much the same vein that the Standards elaborations give context and depth to the Standards, the recently developed KTT indicators have supplied the same context and depth to the KTTs. These are strongly connected to the Standards and provide a clear pathway from beginner level, through to proficiency at the point of graduation.

At panel several providers with multi-sector programmes sought and gained approval to have a single set of Key Teaching Tasks across ECE, primary and secondary (one-year) programmes. The last few years have been a chance to test the success of that approach, both from the view of the students, but also the partners. Monitoring appears to suggest that this unified approach to Key Teaching Tasks is not only acceptable but is apparently also useful. It has allowed otherwise quite diverse programmes to have common vocabulary about expectations for teaching placement practice, and for advancing key teaching skills.   This has also been noticed with the partners in schools and early learning centres where they can clearly see what is expected at each stage of the student teachers learning and provide adequate opportunity for them to practise within their placements.

Key Teaching Tasks are now highly prominent features of handbooks for ITE students, and their Associate Teachers.

Requirement 3.2 - Professional Experience Placements and 3.5 - Minimum Professional Experience Placements

Firstly, providers are expressing that the increased time in classrooms and centres has given students greater opportunity to craft their practice, test ideas and assumptions, and follow lines of pedagogical inquiry to depth. Students continue to name professional experience placement as the single programme element which defines their programme experience.

The increased placement time has undoubtedly placed pressure particularly on the way that one-year programmes are designed, and there didn't appear to be a conclusive single aspect of design which has been 'sacrificed' to make way for greater placement time. This has also impacted on workload for visiting lecturers and associate teachers.

Probably of greater significance for programme leaders and students alike is the 'real life' implications of primary and secondary (one-year) students being separated from their part-time employment. Virtually every provider had accounts that some financially strapped students have opted to drop out (both temporarily and permanently) of ITE study in favour of their meagre part-time incomes. This effect has become particularly prominent post-COVID when students have been expected to return to face-to-face placements. Some providers have offered 'hardship' funds to carry a limited number of students through a difficult period, but the level of that support has not met the need.

The new primary and secondary programmes have increasingly been showing a trend to greater number of school experience days per year, in addition to practicum. Days in school/centre extra to placement would traditionally link them as 'field-based' programmes, but the distinction between field-based and non-field-based programmes is increasingly blurry. Many providers appear to be moving increasingly towards adopting 'field-based' days but have not identified their programmes as 'field-based', possibly in a deliberate intent to avoid comparison with programmes from existing 'field -based' providers. Students and graduates during monitoring speak highly of the 'field-based' experience, possibly because these days are building professional experience, but without the stress/tension of assessment which is normally associated with placements.

Partners in schools and early childhood education contexts spoke strongly about the positive relational nature of the field or employment-based programmes and the ability for the student teacher to develop a real understanding of the nature of change over time for ākonga.

Requirement 4.1 - Culminating Integrative Assessment (CIA)

To date, there have been no monitoring visits of completed three-year programmes, and thus the only CIA experiences have come from one-year graduates. With that, the CIA experience for one-year programmes is decidedly more limited than the CIA experience will be for the first three-year graduates. In summary, the current feedback about CIA is biased towards the one-year programme experiences.

Students did acknowledge that the CIA demanded them to consider their learning as a whole package, but this appreciation was more deeply expressed by lecturers who voiced the value of the assessment. Possibly of greatest value was the 'diagnostic' role that the assessment played for lecturers – by analysing the range of problems-of-practice which students brought to the assessment lecturers better understood the aspect of classroom experience which students were most troubled by – this in turn represented an opportunity for lecturers to use this knowledge to refine and improve their programme design, to address the need.

Problems-of-practice were inevitably varied in nature, but certain topics were frequently identified by lecturers, and named by students: bicultural teaching approaches, differentiated classroom instruction, relationship (behaviour) management, and working skilfully with whānau/families.

During approval providers suggested that partners would likely be attending the CIA presentations at the conclusion of the programme. Monitoring suggests that few partners have fulfilled this intention, commonly citing busyness at school/kura/centres preventing them from supporting the event and impact of Covid 19 restrictions.

Requirement 2.4 - Programme Structure and Content

Some large providers at panel gained approval to bring their ECE/primary and secondary (one-year) programmes closer together by designing common core elements – one such element for some providers was a unified set of Key Teaching Tasks, as discussed above. The main purpose for an 'integrated programme suite' was to offer common core courses, usually around pedagogical or 'professional' issues. A mostly unexpected feature of monitoring has been the movement of some providers with these 'integrated' programmes to rethink the integration approach, and partially disband these common courses.

The most common reason for this has been a concern particularly from ECE programme leaders/lecturers that the essence of their sector has been lost or diminished with the integration – in such cases these providers are dissolving some or all of these common courses, and reinstituting their sector-specific approaches to pedagogy, professionalism, and inclusion.

Requirement 6.4 - Values, Disposition and Fitness to Teach

Although not expected to play a significant part in Interim Monitoring, selection has sometimes been a prominent feature of monitoring, particularly post-COVID. The COVID years were distinguished by online learning, and confinement of students to their homes, for prolonged periods. Providers' 'return to normal' has mostly featured an expectation that students and programmes pick up where

they left off, but students' behaviour has sometimes surprised providers, and in some cases fallen short of the providers' expectations. Providers have almost uniformly reported a new emotional fragility in a significant proportion of their ITE cohorts, which has placed programmes and lecturers under new pressures.

This student fragility has been described/illustrated at monitoring as increased student self-reporting of stress and anxiousness; this is paralleled with lecturers identifying higher frequencies of students showing evidence of not-coping, particularly at placements. This wellbeing issue has impacted students by higher rates of failed or missed assessments, through to lecturers needing to allocate more of their precious work-hours to supporting distressed students. This pattern of student behaviour has apparently transcended ITE, through to other faculties and programmes, which in turn has led to a solution focussed approach, creating institution-wide supports for students such as increased access to counselling, and academic support. For some providers supports that were implemented during Covid, such as regular calls during field-based practice have been retained.

Probably connected with the above, providers have also reported a small but significant increase in students who are knowingly or unknowingly testing the limits of the Code of Professional Responsibility (Code). This pattern may possibly be connected to a worldwide uprise in (particularly) young people's entitlement to 'individual rights', and an increased willingness to challenge orthodoxy. Providers have responded by boosting internal Code exposure in their programmes and seeking support from Council Professional Responsibility staff to deliver 'Code Responsibility' presentations, usually via Zoom. Another response from providers has been for the providers to rescrutinise their selection approaches, with a view to creating refined processes for identifying high-risk applicants at pre-entry.

Summary

The experience of Council Interim Monitors during the 2021/2022 Interim Monitoring has supported both the strength of the new programmes and the value of the temporary monitoring process. The vision and intent of the 2019 ITE Requirements appear to be generally honoured in the new programmes, and appreciated by partners, staff and students.