



# The Professional Growth Cycle for tumuaki | principals and ECE professional leaders

## Discussion of the 'professional learning network of colleagues'

The professional growth cycle (PGC) is a high trust, low burden approach which has been informed by consultation with the profession. The PGC for tumuaki | principals and ECE professional leaders is the process which facilitates the ongoing professional learning and growth of leaders as part of a supportive professional network of colleagues. In turn, this professional growth process permits an endorser to confirm that a professional leader meets the requirements for the renewal of their practising certificate.

### 1. What are the key roles of the professional learning networks for PGC for leaders?

Networks have key contributions to PGC for leaders through presenting an ideal forum for leaders to advance their professional learning safely yet rigorously, and also serve as one potential avenue for professional feedback against *Ngā Paerewa | Standards* for the teaching profession. The professional learning network of colleagues is well-placed to progress leaders' professional learning and provide feedback because this network is constructed by the network members expressly for those purposes.

### 2. Establishing a network - What might a 'professional learning network of colleagues' look like?

An important aspect of the professional growth cycle (PGC) is that tumuaki | principals and ECE professional leaders will work "within a professional leader learning network of colleagues." Because the members of this network will be responsible for endorsement decisions regarding re-certification of members, it will be necessary for all network members to be professional leaders holding a Tiwhikete Whakaakoranga Tūturu | Full Practising Certificate (Category One). Beyond that, the Teaching Council does not intend to be prescriptive about the makeup of the network, and as with all aspects of the Professional Growth Cycle, the context of each PGC's setting determines the network's construction and operation. However, to elaborate on the concept, the Council offers as guidance the following examples below of what these important learning networks might possibly look like. There will, of course, be others.

#### Possible networking context #1

Five of the tumuaki | principals and ECE professional leaders in the local Kāhui Ako decide to build the PGC network from their Kāhui Ako model. They agree to meet face-to-face twice a term, and they will also have a quick "touch base" at a set time once a week via zoom - sometimes for as little as 10 mins, sometimes for much longer. They will keep in touch in terms of their on-going learning when they pop into each other's school, or via phone, and email.

#### Possible networking context #2

Two ECE leaders from different ends of the country 'met' online at a webinar. They wanted to continue their conversations and followed up on-line. They decide they will each invite three other colleagues with complementary needs for professional growth to join a regular online hui as the networking element of their PGC.

### Possible networking context #3

Five secondary tumuaki | principals and an external facilitator have had a growth-focused professional learning group for some years. They agree to continue working together and to create a supplementary PGC agenda to ensure they have intentional discussions fulfilling the elements of their PGC.

### Possible networking context #4

For some time, a group of primary tumuaki | principals have met collegially after their once-a-term local association hui and decide to formalise this. The same group will organise themselves to have an additional meeting each term at one of their schools (they'll visit each other's schools on rotation). They will organise these meetings to ensure they have focused learning conversations related to their PGC elements. At their first two PGC meetings they will invite an external coaching expert to help them get started.

### Possible networking context #5

A diverse group of seven professional leaders across ECE, primary and secondary sectors know each other from a common study-group in a master's educational leadership degree they are each undertaking part-time. Recognising that their study-group has been a highly stimulating and demanding environment for their professional growth, they decide to use the same members to create a professional learning network of colleagues.

## 3. How large could the network of colleagues be?

While there are many scenarios that would allow professional leaders to meet the requirements of their PGC, it is expected that a common factor will be the size of the professional learning network of colleagues. The working group, which led the Council in the PGC's design, advised that the optimal size of a group may be about five or six members; this sized group will enable members to forge a collective professional purpose, positively challenge each other, actively engage in providing feedback, and provide support as required. Although members of the professional growth cycle network of colleagues may potentially have connections through other professional networks, it is important for the integrity of the endorsement decisions that the network approaches PGC work with diligence and purpose – please refer to Question 6 and Appendix One within this document for some hints in this area.

## 4. How does a leader PGC network relate to Rauhuia | Leadership Space?

Given that Rauhuia | Leadership Space serves as a tūāpapa | foundation to help teachers unleash the power of their leadership in the lives of children, young people, and the community, the connections between PGC and Rauhuia are unmistakable. Furthermore, both the PGC and Rauhuia share common purpose for leaders to use the power of networks to seek professional growth, build new knowledge about effective leadership through partnerships, and problem-solve at the local and national levels.

The *Te Rautaki Kaihautū mō te Umanga Whakaakoranga o Aotearoa | Leadership Strategy for the Teaching Profession* serves as a valuable connector between Rauhuia and the Professional Growth Cycle – focus area 3 (Personalised professional learning) and focus area 4 (Building partnerships, communities and networks) are particularly relevant for PGC.

## 5. Is it possible for leaders to migrate between different professional learning networks of colleagues?

It is inevitable that some professional leaders will shift from a leadership role in one setting, to a leadership role in another, or similarly a leader may experience so much professional growth from their initial professional learning network of colleagues that they may wish to pursue a new direction in professional growth from a new network. Migrating from one network to another is possible, without disrupting a certificate endorsement decision.

Depending on the timing within the school year that the migration occurs, the endorser in the new professional learning network of colleagues may wish to contact the leader's previous endorser from the last network. Alternatively, the leader's growth within the new professional learning network of colleagues may be so apparent that a 'handover' from one endorser to another may not be required.

## 6. Once a network has been formed, what's next?

Professional Growth Cycle hui do not need to be highly formal, but they do need to be well-organised and purposeful if they are to be of value to busy leaders. What follows are some suggestions for the establishment and maintenance of a meaningful Professional Growth Cycle network, applicable across a range of contexts.

### 6.1 Establishing a common sense of purpose

The first meeting is critical to establishing a sense of purpose. Common experience of educational leaders has shown that the eventual success of a learning network can be traced back to its initial meetings. An interim chair/facilitator/leader could be chosen to ensure the first meeting is efficient, but the chairing role for subsequent meetings could be rotated at pre-agreed intervals to share the load and usefully distribute the leadership experience. Considerations at the initial meeting could include:

- a draft set of principles to underpin the work of the group (see Appendix One)
- agreement on how the meetings will be chaired/facilitated
- scheduled dates, times, and venue for future meetings
- the process for establishing the agenda that keeps the focus on professional growth, and away from administrative matters:
  - where the information will be stored that allows for access by all
  - discussion and/or agreement on what information needs to be stored and shared
  - establish a shared understanding of the endorsement process, such as who will endorse who, and the role of naturally occurring evidence in making these decisions.
- what professional growth is to all members and how the network can support the learning needs that have been identified.

### 6.2 Maintaining the network

The planned sequence of meetings will need to be well-chaired and well-organised to maintain its sense of purpose for all members and agreeing on how to manage this will be very important. The usual tools for the management of meetings are likely to be necessary, such as meeting reminders, agenda (including reporting back on actions), and minute keeping.

An external facilitator can take pressure off busy tumuaki | principals, ECE professional leaders, or sharing the role of chair might be a preferred model, but agreement on how best to manage the goal of meeting will be an important focus for the first or second meeting. If used as support to the network, the external facilitator cannot professionally endorse any members.

## 7. What is the responsibility of the professional learning network in endorsement decisions?

Each member of a professional learning network of colleagues will be involved in the (potential) endorsement of another member of the group to confirm that they have participated in the PGC and meet *Ngā Paerewa | Standards* for the teaching profession. The endorsement process cannot be reciprocal, i.e., two professional leaders cannot endorse each other, nor can close relatives endorse each other. The Council's recently updated [Aratohu Kaiohia | Endorser Guidelines](#) support the PGC endorsement process and detail the process to follow if there are concerns that a professional leader might not meet *Ngā Paerewa | Standards* for the teaching profession.

## Appendix One:

Some principles that could be considered in developing a draft agreed kaupapa for the professional learning network of colleagues, to be discussed/amended/agreed at the first meeting.

### **We will:**

- observe confidentiality, i.e., not only will all members be very respectful of what they hear, they will be very careful about what they share
- support the agreed leader/facilitator/chair - or those operating in a co-leadership role
- share the responsibility for enriching the discussion
- come to meetings on time, prepared, informed, and open minded
- contribute to the group being responsive, reflective, and supportive
- agree to intentionally address the elements of the PGC
- ensure that the endorsement process is followed.

For the principles being agreed to, it is helpful to have a clear idea of what each will look and feel like in a network hui. It can also be helpful to discuss examples of what the principles are intended to be.