

Building better businesses through workplace literacy and numeracy

FACT SHEET

Literacy and numeracy skills are crucial for building successful businesses and ensuring New Zealand has a competitive, skilled and productive workforce. Unfortunately, many New Zealand workers do not have the literacy and numeracy skills required to do their jobs safely and effectively.

International (OECD, 2006)¹ research shows that about 43 per cent of New Zealand adults have less than optimal literacy skills and 51 per cent have less than optimal numeracy skills for a knowledge-based economy. New Zealand's low levels of literacy have been identified as contributing to our relatively low productivity.

Many businesses benefit significantly from undertaking workplace literacy and numeracy training. Benefits include:

- › verbal and written instructions being followed
- › more confident and engaged staff who can take on more responsibility
- › fewer workplace accidents
- › reduction in wastage
- › fewer mistakes being made
- › increased customer satisfaction rates
- › increases in productivity and profitability.

For many employees, workplace literacy and numeracy can also dramatically improve their lives through greater participation in work, social and family life.

Supporting employers, supporting employees

The Tertiary Education Commission has a number of funds and resources available to assist employers to introduce workplace literacy and numeracy training programmes. Below is an overview of some of these funds and resources.

Workplace Literacy and Numeracy Fund

The Workplace Literacy and Numeracy Fund supports training programmes that are delivered within the context of workplace learning. These programmes are specifically tailored to meet the needs of employees and their employers. The fund intent is to provide 'kick start' funding which supports a sustainable, long-term training approach to strengthening employee skills. The funding intent is for a maximum of two years. The programmes can be offered in two ways: led by a tertiary education organisation (TEO) or led by employers.

¹www.educationcounts.govt.nz/topics/research/all/all_2006

TEO-led programmes

The TEC contracts TEOs to deliver workplace literacy and numeracy programmes either in the workplace or through a tailored programme of up to five employees delivered off-site. The tailored programmes are often used when businesses are not large enough to implement their own literacy and numeracy programme.

Employer-led programmes

For this contestable fund the TEC contracts directly with the employer to organise a workplace literacy and numeracy programme. The employer can either use in-house literacy and numeracy training capabilities or contract a trainer or education provider.

Intensive Literacy and Numeracy Fund

The TEC manages the Intensive Literacy and Numeracy (ILN) Fund. This fund supports the intensive delivery of quality fees-free literacy, language and numeracy training for learners with low-level literacy and numeracy skills.

Programmes must be delivered in an appropriately structured context with strong community links. These links will be evidenced through relationships between tertiary education organisations, local business, industry, employers, learners, iwi, and the wider community.

Embedded literacy and numeracy training through industry training organisations

Industry training organisations (ITOs) have embedded literacy and numeracy as part of their training programmes at levels 1 to 3 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework.

How does your business get involved?

The TEC's Skills Highway staff can talk with employers about workplace literacy and numeracy training options and can be reached at:

skills.highway@tec.govt.nz or 0800 601 301.

Or contact your ITO or local TEO to learn about the other services and programmes they offer.

New Zealand Government



Tertiary Education Commission
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua

Contact Tertiary Education Commission
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua
EMAIL skills.highway@tec.govt.nz
TEL 0800 601 301
For more info go to: www.skillshighway.govt.nz



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