

Frequently asked questions: 2026 School Onsite Training Programme

Read our responses to the common questions people ask about the School Onsite Training Programme (SOTP).

Q: Is there a residency requirement for student teachers wanting to apply for 2026 SOTP?

A: All awardees of the 2026 SOTP funded places must be New Zealand permanent residents or citizens.

Q: Can student teachers receive a 2026 SOTP funded place in conjunction with other Ministry scholarships, awards or grants?

A: Student teachers awarded a 2026 SOTP funded place are not eligible to be a recipient of a TeachNZ Scholarship.

Q: How many times per week should a 2026 SOTP student teacher be onsite at their host school?

A: The requirement is still three days per week, excluding practicum time. How those three days per week are achieved can be arranged between the ITE provider, student teacher and the host school (e.g. they can agree on a set-up of two full days, plus two half days onsite).

Q: Our school wants to be a host school for 2026 SOTP. How do we participate?

A: Schools and kura wanting to be a host school for the 2026 SOTP intake should contact their partner ITE provider to express their interest.

Schools who do not have a partner ITE provider can refer to the list of providers available on the [Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand website](#). We encourage schools to directly get in touch with ITE providers whose programmes are best suited to their needs.

More information on the funding application process for 2026 can be found here: [Applications for 2026](#)

Q: If I am a staff member (e.g. teacher aide or kaiārahi) of my host school or kura, can I still continue to work there while I'm undertaking the programme?

A: You can complete an ITE programme while working in a school. You may be:

- employed in a school as a teacher aide, librarian, or member of learning support staff
- connected with a school, or
- someone with a specialist skill or a skill in short supply that has a Limited Authority to Teach (LAT) or is eligible for one.

However, you can only be employed and undertake responsibilities required of your staff role on days you are not undertaking requirements as an SOTP participant.

Q: I am a student teacher, and I want to sign up for 2026 SOTP. How do I apply?

A: ITE providers and host schools are responsible for the selection of student teachers participating in their respective SOTP. Note that their enrolment process may vary.

Student teachers should speak with ITE providers whose programme is best suited to their needs. A list of providers with ITE programmes leading to teacher registration is available on the [Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand website](#).

Q: Can schools that haven't completed their Professional Learning and Development (PLD) maths curriculum days apply for SOTP?

A: All schools can apply to be part of the SOTP. As part of the application process, we will be asking schools to demonstrate a commitment to PLD in maths and structured literacy by showing they have either completed PLD in these areas, or have it underway or planned.

Q: Can one school work with two ITE providers? We usually get student teachers from two different ITE providers.

A: Yes, you can, as long as you do not apply with the same student teacher across both ITE providers.

Q: Will preference be given to hard-to-staff areas?

A: For 2026, the focus is on quality teaching and aligning the programme with the Government's wider education priorities.

Note, however, that the Ministry offers a range of workforce initiatives. Other current and upcoming programmes have a specific focus on priority staffing schools. Please see the [Workforce Initiative Searcher for Principals](#) for more information about workforce initiatives your school or kura may be eligible for.

Q: Can you define the science of learning for us?

A: It is essentially how students learn. Further information about it is available on [Tāhurangi - New Zealand Curriculum website](#).

Q: Māori medium kura does not have structured maths. Are they eligible?

A: Yes, Kaupapa Māori and Māori Medium kura are eligible to apply. We appreciate that not all criteria apply to them, so the requirements for them will look slightly different.

Q: Is there any ITE offering a program that prepares teachers to teach in the ORS (Ongoing Resourcing Scheme) funded secondary space?

A: A list of approved ITE programmes leading to teacher registration is available on the [Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand website](#).

Q: Are schools required to employ the student teachers they host?

A: Schools are not required to employ any of the student teachers they host. It is ultimately the school's decision whether they want to employ the student teacher following a positive experience. It is worth noting, however, that our data shows 68% of hosted students have been employed in their host schools following the completion of the SOTP course.

Q: Does the SOTP funded placement come with any obligation to teach for a fixed period following course completion (i.e. typically referred to as 'bonding')?

A: No, it does not.

Q: Does a school need to source the student teacher they will host or will the ITE provider do that for them?

A: Schools are encouraged to identify people within their communities who have potential of becoming a great teacher. Once a school identifies someone, they should connect with an approved ITE provider so that person can make an application to becoming an SOTP student teacher. This approach gives the school an opportunity to choose someone who is best suited to the role, the school and their community.

Schools who are not able to find someone from their local community can still participate. They can link up with an ITE provider to source suitable student teachers.

Q: Are undergraduates eligible to apply to SOTP?

A: The SOTP is only available to approved graduate or post-graduate ITE programmes.