



Guidance Counsellor Training Study Award Application Guide

About the Guidance Counsellor Training Study Award

Each year, the Ministry offers four full-time teacher equivalent (FTTE) study awards to untrained guidance counsellors and teachers who want to become guidance counsellors in state or state-integrated secondary schools. The Guidance Counsellor Training Study Award provides support to complete a master's qualification in counselling.

What the award provides

The study award includes:

- study leave for part-time study up to 4 years or full-time study for 2 years
- core compulsory tuition fees
- continuation of your normal salary from school while on study leave
- a contribution towards course-related professional supervision costs
- a contribution towards travel or relocation costs, subject to meeting the travel eligibility criteria.

Study leave and costs

The amount of study leave awarded is based on the length of your course. We will confirm course dates with your tertiary provider if your application is successful.

You will need to check with your principal to see if any fixed-term unit and allowances will be paid while you are on leave.

The study award funds relief costs to your school for the duration of leave, as well as the contributions above. Funding for the award will only cover study undertaken in 2027.

Travel or relocation contributions

To be eligible for assistance with travel or relocation, you must be travelling more than 100km return between your usual workplace and your study centre.

You can claim a maximum of NZD\$2000 per year if you are studying on the same island as your current school, or NZD\$3500 per year if you are studying on the other island.

Travel or relocation assistance will be paid in two instalments, the first in March and the second in July.

If you do not complete your study award, you may be required to repay travel or relocation contributions.

Eligibility

To apply for a Guidance Counsellor Training Study Award, you must:

- be working in a state or state-integrated secondary school
- meet the requirements to apply to study a Master of Counselling at an approved tertiary institute
- not previously been awarded a Guidance Counsellor Training Study Award
- provide support from your principal and school Board or employer
- be employed by a school for the term of the award, if you are on a fixed-term contract or are a long-term relieving counsellor or teacher.

Approved tertiary providers

There are four approved providers that offer a Master of Counselling. Visit their websites to learn more about their qualifications.

Tertiary provider	Website
University of Auckland	Master of Counselling – University of Auckland
University of Canterbury	Master of Counselling UC
Massey University	Master of Counselling – MCouns - Massey University
University of Waikato	Master of Counselling Apply to Study University of Waikato

How to apply

Apply using the application form on the Education Workforce website: [Guidance Counsellor Training Study Award | Education Workforce](#)

Late applications

We will consider late applications where:

- you have experienced technical issues that could not be resolved before the closing date
- you have experienced an exceptional personal or family-related issues that resulted in missing the application period.

We can provide an additional five working days past the application closing date for late applications. Submissions for considering late applications must be made no later than 19 October 2026 and full submissions completed by 23 October 2026.

Late submission of principal and Board support will not be considered after 25 September 2026.

Complete your application form

Confirm you are eligible for the study award.

Read the privacy statement.

Provide personal details including your name, date of birth and contact information.

Provide your current employment information:

- Your teacher registration number. Find this on the Teaching Council website (<https://teachingcouncil.nz/en/find-a-registered-teacher>)
- Your teacher registration status.
- Your Ministry of Education employee number. Find this on your payslip.

You will be asked about your school and employment history. You will also be asked about any previous study awards, sabbaticals, or supported leave you have taken in the last five years.

Study plan (approved qualifications)

Select one of the four approved qualifications.

Provide a full study plan. This includes details of each paper, their point values and the total number of points or credits you intend to complete in 2027.

Written statements

The core of the application is three written statements. We recommend writing your statements in a separate document and then copying them into the form to avoid data loss.

1. Benefits of study (250-word limit)

Outline the benefits of the proposed study/research topic to:

- yourself, both personally and professionally
- your students' learning outcomes
- your school
- the education sector.

2. Recent study (250-word limit)

Describe any study or professional development you have undertaken in the last five years and explain its relevance to this application and your proposed study.

3. Skills and Experience (250-word limit)

Provide a statement that describes how:

- this proposed study/research topic fits into your wider career plan
- the proposed study/research topic helps address any major disadvantage/barrier you have experienced, that may include:

- distance or professional isolation,
 - the socio-economic status of the school or community, or
 - specific requirements of the school.
- your experience and skills support your development as a guidance counsellor.

Reference

Upload evidence of your principal and school Board. This can be one of the following:

- A letter of support signed by both your principal and a presiding Board member.
- Two signed letters of support from your principal and a presiding Board member.
- An email from your principal and a copy of the relevant school Board motion supporting your study.

Applicant declaration

Declare that all your information is true and correct. Tick all the boxes to complete your application.

How is my application assessed?

A selection panel assesses your application on the following:

- How your study benefits you, your students, your school and the wider education sector.
- If your previous study/professional development aligns to your proposed study.
- Demonstration of how the proposed study/research topic aligns to:
 - your wider career plan
 - relevant teaching experience
 - experience within another industry (if applicable), and
 - your life skills.
- How your study will help you address distance, professional isolation issues, or barriers which have prevented you from taking up opportunities previously.
- That your reference supports your application.

The selection panel ensures the process is transparent, fair, consistent, and impartial, while promoting equal opportunity and non-discrimination.