

**From:** 9(2)(a)  
**To:** 9(2)(a)  
**Cc:** 9(2)(a)  
**Subject:** RE: Urgent advice re approval of new social work qualification  
**Date:** Monday, 16 February 2026 8:41:00 am  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

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Kia ora 9(2)(a)

I hope you had a nice weekend and that you're faring okay with the wild weather we've had overnight!

I've provided some answers to your questions below in red. Please let me know if you have any follow-up questions, or if there is any particular points you would be keen to discuss further

- If preferential funding goes to 3 year degrees, does that mean to ALL 3 year degrees or just to some? **We would ideally fund all providers that seek to deliver this given we consider social work to be an investment priority, so long as we have assurance there is availability within the network of provision.**
- And if 3 year programmes are to receive preferential funding, is that likely to mean that 4 year programmes (aa at the universities) may not be funded at all, or in a reduced manner? As early as 2027, or would it take effect later for some? **We wish to signal that we want to see increased flexibility of delivery that is more effective in ensuring favourable outcomes for students and less strain on the workplace environments where students are placed. We would hope that those still seeking to deliver the 4-year degree in 2027 will consider our preference to invest in more flexible and streamlined pathways, and we are happy to liaise further with any TEOs who have concerns about our decision to prioritise the three-year programme as needed.**
- I understand that 'priority programmes' are those like social work which are highly desirable in the community and where we are very short of workers, correct? – **It is correct that where there is high community need would help in designating something as a priority. For health professions, our priorities are broadly aligned with the priorities listed in the Health Workforce Plan published by Health New Zealand.**
- Finally, did I get this right re process: TEC provides guidance to the Minister, once it's gone to your Board – the new approach will be published in March, implemented in July and notification given to TEOs via your advisers? – **At the moment, TEC's Plan Guidance for the 2027 investment year is with Ministers for their review (as per their request), after which the Guidance will be published in early March for TEOs to consider for the development of their 2027 investment plans. TEOs will then need to submit their proposed plans to us by July, and these plans will be reviewed by us between July and October. Once we have reviewed all proposed plans, we notify TEOs of our decisions in writing in November.**

Ngā mihi

9(2)(a)

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**From:** 9(2)(a)  
**Sent:** Friday, 13 February 2026 12:26 pm  
**To:** 9(2)(a) <[9\(2\)\(a\)@tec.govt.nz](mailto:9(2)(a)@tec.govt.nz)>  
**Cc:** 9(2)(a) <[9\(2\)\(a\)@tec.govt.nz](mailto:9(2)(a)@tec.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** RE: Urgent advice re approval of new social work qualification

Thanks 9(2)(a) – just some prior thinking on this, some of which may already be noted in your piece but in the meantime, this FYI including some updates you may not yet be aware of...

Bethlehem Tertiary Institute will begin offering a three-year degree this year Feb 2026, as approved by NZQA and SWRB in 2025.

Most of the Polytechnics (8 of 9) and the two Wānanga who provide social work programmes are applying for a change in Bachelor degree course length from four years to three years, with prescription events happening through 2026 and the likelihood that most if not all will be offering a three year degree from 2027 if they meet the Education Standards as well as NZQA requirements.

We anticipate that the change in course length will support attraction into the programme, improve retention within the programme and thereby completion. This makes a strong case for a better ROI in future years.

At the same time a three-year course reduces overall student hardship as experienced in a four-year course and the new

flexibilities in the SWRB Education Standards allow programmes to explore better options for placements within existing places of work or in different time frames, alongside better options for RPL.

This may assist TEC with ensuring social work programmes have equitable funding with other professionally based programmes, given that the national shortfall in student numbers and graduated social workers remains.

See you at 1pm!

Ngā mihi

9(2)(a)

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**From:** 9(2)(a) <[redacted]@tec.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Friday, 13 February 2026 10:32 am  
**To:** 9(2)(a) <[redacted]@swrb.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** 9(2)(a) <[redacted]@tec.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** RE: Urgent advice re approval of new social work qualification

Kia ora 9(2)(a)

Thanks for your swift reply!

Sounds good, I'll book us in between 1-1:30pm, we shouldn't need longer than half an hour

Thanks again, and see you in the meeting!

9(2)(a)

9(2)(a)

Kaitohutohu Matua | **Senior Advisor**  
Putanga Ākonga me te Haumi | **Learner & Investment Outcomes**  
Aramahi me te Haumi | **Careers and Investment Design**  
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua | **Tertiary Education Commission**



9(2)(a) <[redacted]@tec.govt.nz>  
9(2)(a) <[redacted]@tec.govt.nz>  
PO Box 27-048, Wellington 6141, New Zealand  
[www.tec.govt.nz](http://www.tec.govt.nz)

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**From:** 9(2)(a) <[redacted]@swrb.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Friday, 13 February 2026 10:29 am  
**To:** 9(2)(a) <[redacted]@tec.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** 9(2)(a) <[redacted]@tec.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** RE: Urgent advice re approval of new social work qualification

Kia ora 9(2)

Lucky Friday! I can do 1-2pm this afternoon if you'd like to send an invite.

Ngā mihi

9(2)(a)

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**From:** 9(2)(a) <[redacted]@tec.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Friday, 13 February 2026 10:05 am  
**To:** 9(2)(a) <[redacted]@swrb.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** 9(2)(a) <[redacted]@tec.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** RE: Urgent advice re approval of new social work qualification

Kia ora 9(2)(a)

Hope you've had a good week so far!

Just reaching out as we received a request internally to add some wording about the new 3-year social work degrees into our upcoming guidance for TEOs' investment plans, and we're keen to run this past you to make sure the SWRB is comfortable with the language we intend to use.

9(2)(a) and I are free between 1-2pm and 3-4pm today if these times would work for you for a quick catch-up on this, or 3-4pm Monday if today doesn't suit.

Please let us know what time works best for you when you can.

Ngā mihi

9(2)(a)

9(2)(a)

Kaitohutohu Matua | **Senior Advisor**  
Putanga Ākonga me te Haumi | **Learner & Investment Outcomes**  
Aramahi me te Haumi | **Careers and Investment Design**  
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua | **Tertiary Education Commission**



9(2)(a)  
9(2)(a) @tec.govt.nz  
PO Box 27-048, Wellington 6141, New Zealand  
[www.tec.govt.nz](http://www.tec.govt.nz)

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**From:** 9(2)(a) @swrb.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Monday, 26 January 2026 1:23 pm  
**To:** 9(2)(a) @tec.govt.nz>; 9(2)(a) @tec.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** 9(2)(a) @swrb.govt.nz>; 9(2)(a) @swrb.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** RE: Urgent advice re approval of new social work qualification

Kia ora 9(2)(a)

Thanks for that wide-ranging discussion this morning, most informative and helpful. As well, I was pleased to be able to assure TEC that Bethlehem Tertiary Institute provided an exemplary application for their new 3-year degree and the SWRB had no hesitation in prescribing the degree nor any concerns with either the programme or the institution itself.

As discussed, the change from a four-year to a three-year degree necessitates close monitoring at the end of the first year of delivery to ensure that the TEO is managing across the programme, including in accessing sufficient field education placements. As do TEC, we recognise the difficulties TEOS are having in finding sufficient placements, particularly for a potentially increasing number of students who may enrol.

We will also encourage TEOs to notify both NZQA and TEC of their intent to introduce a new degree, and we will keep you notified as well when we approve their new qualifications.

Please let me know if I have missed any key points of our discussion, and I look forward to future communications.

Ngā mihi

9(2)(a)

**9(2)(a) Deputy Registrar Education (Acting)**

Social Workers Registration Board - Kāhui Whakamana Tauwhiro | [www.swrb.govt.nz](http://www.swrb.govt.nz) |

PO Box 3452, Wellington 6140, New Zealand



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**From:** 9(2)(a) <[redacted]@tec.govt.nz>

**Sent:** Monday, 26 January 2026 9:34 am

**To:** 9(2)(a) <[redacted]@swrb.govt.nz>; 9(2)(a) <[redacted]@swrb.govt.nz>; 9(2)(a) <[redacted]@swrb.govt.nz>

**Cc:** 9(2)(a) <[redacted]@tec.govt.nz>

**Subject:** RE: Urgent advice re approval of new social work qualification

Kia ora 9(2)(a)

Thanks for coming back to me so quickly, apologies I did not respond on Friday, I was only working for a couple of hours in the morning.

We can talk more about it today, but it is useful for us to have some of your context to help make decisions. We can take a nuanced approach if we have some reassurance of your confidence in the provider and the qualification.

Ngā mihi,

9(2)(a) MA (she/her)

Kaiwhakahaere Rōpū Putanga Ākonga me te Haumi | **Team Manager, Learner and Investment Outcomes**  
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua | **Tertiary Education Commission**

9(2)(a)

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**From:** 9(2)(a) <[redacted]@swrb.govt.nz>

**Sent:** Friday, 23 January 2026 9:54 am

**To:** 9(2)(a) <[redacted]@swrb.govt.nz>; 9(2)(a) <[redacted]@tec.govt.nz>; 9(2)(a) <[redacted]@swrb.govt.nz>

**Cc:** 9(2)(a) <[redacted]@tec.govt.nz>

**Subject:** RE: Urgent advice re approval of new social work qualification

Kia ora 9(2)(a)

Thanks for raising this potential issue. As 9(2)(a) notes below, it is more of a caveat in checking that the first year has gone well, with a light-touch check at the end of the first year prior to full confirmation.

But if the manner in which we are wording our confirmation is calling their funding approval into question, it may be that we need to address this in wording and approach so this does not happen with future prescription reports, of which there maybe others this year. I would appreciate speaking to you if you are free, as I have 10-11am free this morning and can send an email invite if you wish?

Otherwise I am free Monday as well.

Ngā mihi

9(2)(a)

**From:** 9(2)(a) [redacted]@swrb.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Friday, 23 January 2026 9:24 am  
**To:** 9(2)(a) [redacted]@tec.govt.nz>; 9(2)(a) [redacted]@swrb.govt.nz>; 9(2)(a) [redacted]@swrb.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** 9(2)(a) [redacted]@tec.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** RE: Urgent advice re approval of new social work qualification  
**Importance:** High

Good morning, 9(2)(a) [redacted], good to hear from you and Happy New Year.

I have cc'd in our Registrar, 9(2)(a) [redacted] and our Deputy Registrar Education, 9(2)(a) [redacted] who runs the prescription process for our qualifications.

I suspect they put in a caveat as it is a new programme. Also noting that we do not want to jeopardise funding a full programme in any way – so yes, I think a conversation would be best to tease that out.

I am not involved in the detail of this side of our business – so will dip out of further correspondence – unless you feel it would be useful as we know each other????

Many thanks 9(2)(a) [redacted] and 9(2)(a) [redacted] over to you.

9(2)(a) [redacted]

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**From:** 9(2)(a) [redacted]@tec.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Friday, 23 January 2026 8:54 am  
**To:** 9(2)(a) [redacted]@swrb.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** 9(2)(a) [redacted]@tec.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** Urgent advice re approval of new social work qualification

Kia ora 9(2)(a) [redacted]

I hope you had a great break and are having a good start to the new year!

I'm reaching out as some of my colleagues have asked for advice/context regarding the approval of a new 3-year social qualification from the Bethlehem Tertiary Institute. Their request to us for funding is unique as the approval information from yourselves notes they are approved for one year, with a review to take place next year. It's unusual for us to fund a 3-year qualification that only has approval from the regulator for one year, so I wanted to reach out and see if you were able to provide more context for this to help us reach a solution on funding.

It might be helpful to meet to talk through the context a bit. I'm only working a couple of hours this morning, so if you had time on Monday that would be really helpful as we need to sort it quite urgently.

I am free on Monday between 11.30-2.30 and 3-4pm if any of those times work for you. And of course if you aren't quite the right person to talk to, I would greatly appreciate it if you could send this on to whoever is!

Thank you.

Ngā mihi,

9(2)(a) [redacted] MA (she/her)

Kaiwhakahaere Rōpū Putanga Ākonga me te Haumi | **Team Manager, Learner and Investment Outcomes**  
Ngā Aramahi me te Hoahoa Haumi | **Careers and Investment Design**  
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua | **Tertiary Education Commission**

I work a nine-day fortnight and am off every other Friday

9(2)(a) [redacted]

9(2)(a) [redacted]@tec.govt.nz

PO Box 27-048, Wellington 6141, New Zealand  
[www.tec.govt.nz](http://www.tec.govt.nz)

