Tertiary Education Policy

Vision

The tertiary education sector is vibrant, innovative, and responsive.

Values and Principles

Decisions relating to tertiary education must be consistent with these values and principles:

- *Honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi*: Mātauranga Māori should be championed throughout tertiary education. Involvement of tangata whenua is vital to ensure provision of tertiary education is inclusive of Māori from the outset and provides services appropriate for Māori.

- *Ecological Wisdom*: Tertiary education should be centred on the evolving needs of our society and the natural world.

- *Social Responsibility*: Tertiary education should be equitable and respect and reflect the diverse needs of students of different ages, outlooks and abilities.

- *Appropriate Decision-Making*: Education should be focussed on the aspirations of the students and their current and future needs in a changing world.

- *Non-Violence*: Cultural, sexual, gender, disability, religious and all other forms of diversity of students and staff should be celebrated, and discrimination actively opposed. Cooperation, not competition, should be fostered between all education providers.

- *Public good:* Tertiary education, and tertiary education institutions themselves, are primarily a public good, and should be autonomous, well-resourced and receive active support from Government accordingly.

- *Professional*: Tertiary educators and related staff should be valued and supported as professionals.

Summary

Tertiary education is primarily a public good, and its resourcing and accessibility should be based on that understanding. Involving tangata whenua is vital to ensure tertiary education is inclusive of Māori from the outset, provides services appropriate for Māori and upholds Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The education provided by tertiary institutions should be of high quality and focussed on the aspirations of the students, respecting and reflecting cultural diversity and the diverse needs of those of different ages, outlooks and abilities. Educators and staff should be valued as professionals and be supported accordingly. Cooperation, not competition, should be fostered between all education providers, and research should be supported to remain autonomous, receiving active support from the Government where it contributes to the public good.

Strategic Priorities

The Green Party's strategic goals include:

> *"... inclusive education will be available to all."*

Actions in this policy that will help achieve this include:

- Work with tangata whenua to provide high quality and accessible tertiary education services for Māori, including initiatives for alternative or culturally appropriate education approaches that are effective in delivering services to Māori. (2.1)
- Undertake a comprehensive review of the Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF) model and investigate the merits of alternative funding streams. (3.1)
- Move towards a more representative, democratic and transparent governance model for all tertiary institutions, in which staff, students and communities work in partnership on governing bodies, including with Māori representation. (3.2)
- Review the levels of financial support given to students to ensure they are equitable and at a liveable level. (4.1)
- Work towards establishing a 'fee-free' public tertiary education system. (4.11)
- Implement a Code of Practice to be adhered to by all tertiary institutions to ensure disabled students are provided with equitable opportunities to achieve their individual capabilities and participate in all aspects of tertiary education life. (5.2)

Connected Policies

This policy is highly connected to our [Education](#) and [Research, Science and Technology](#) Policies.

Policy Positions

1. Ensuring relevance in a changing world

Issues

Students need to apply their education in a complex and dynamic world. The offerings of tertiary institutions do not always keep up to date with those changes while treating all disciplines fairly, reducing their competitiveness and their relevance to today's challenges.

Actions

1.1. Work to embed sustainability across the curriculum in order to:

1.1.1. Improve the quality and relevance of education for all enrolled students;

1.1.2. Better prepare domestic students for meaningful work at home and abroad; and

1.1.3. Strengthen offerings to attract international students in a competitive international education marketplace.

1.2. Provide scholarships, and provide opportunities for a wider range of academic courses to be taught that are relevant to the challenges and opportunities related to climate change, including responses that prioritise climate justice.

2. Honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Issues

More Māori participate in tertiary education than in the past, but little has been done to adapt tertiary education systems to reflect this, or respond to the needs of Māori students. A large majority of Māori in tertiary education attend polytechnics rather than at university.

Rangatiratanga should be upheld and enhanced in Māori education at all levels, and this should be prioritised by tertiary education providers.

Actions

2.1. Work with tangata whenua to provide high quality and accessible tertiary education services for Māori, including initiatives for alternative or culturally appropriate education approaches that are effective in delivering services to Māori.

2.2. Acknowledge the historical connection of tertiary institutions to breaches of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and support the return of land to hapū and iwi.

3. Research and Governance

Issues

Māori and Pacific academics continue to be under-represented, under-paid and under-promoted in academia, and institutional governance models and decisions about what research is funded have implications well beyond the tertiary education sector. Diversity and representation in both spheres is critical.

Actions

3.1. Undertake a comprehensive review of the Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF) model and investigate the merits of alternative funding streams (see also our Research, Science and Technology Policy for details on funding research).

3.2. Move towards a more representative, democratic and transparent governance model for all tertiary institutions, in which staff, students and communities work in partnership on governing bodies, including with Māori representation.

4. Financing for Students and Tertiary Education Institutions

Issues

Student debt is a significant barrier to entering, fully participating in and completing education for many New Zealanders. The current lack of financial support while studying is an obstacle to participation in tertiary education. Funding for Private Training Establishments (PTEs) should not compromise the funding of the public education sector.

Actions

A. Student Financial Support

4.1. *Review the levels of financial support given to students to ensure they are equitable and at a liveable level.*

4.2. *Ensure equitable access to financial support for tertiary education including for part-time, post-graduate and mature students.*

4.3. *Provide a universal student allowance.*

4.4. *Improve access to the Independent Circumstances Allowance.*

B. Student Debt

4.5. Explore options to introduce a debt write-off scheme that limits the individual burden of student debt while incentivising graduates to contribute to Aotearoa New Zealand.

4.6.   Ensure that repayment rates reflect borrowers' ability to repay.

4.7.   Lengthen the repayment holiday for overseas student loan borrowers

4.8.   Abolish border arrests for student loan repayment violations.

4.9.   Explore repayment incentive options, such as a voluntary repayment bonus scheme or reduced interest sector bonding scheme.

4.10.   Support zero-interest on student loans.

C. Tertiary Education Fees and Funding

4.11.   Working towards a 'fee-free' public tertiary education system:

4.11.1.   Remove the ability for the Tertiary Education Commission to approve exemptions from fees maxima, while ensuring education quality and student support are not impacted as a result.

4.11.2.   Investigate bonding, or other mechanisms of contribution, in exchange for fee-free tertiary education.

4.12.   Review current funding to tertiary institutions to ensure that subsidies are sufficient to meet real costs and to provide sufficient funding to:

4.12.1.   Improve staff to student ratios;

4.12.2.   Improve library resources and staffing;

4.12.3.   Improve staff wellbeing, recruitment and retention, including of specialised professional and academic staff;

4.12.4.   Improve the range of course offerings in subject areas where lack of financial resourcing has been the main reason for their decline;

4.12.5.   Improve Māori and Pasifika access and outcomes, including through more equitable recognition and funding of whare wānanga;

4.12.6.   Ensure reasonable access to learning or vocational opportunities at a range of levels in regional centres; and

4.12.7.   Deliver a wide range of up-to-date courses targeting evolving social and ecological issues and key skills shortages in Aotearoa.

4.13.   Explore alternatives to the Equivalent Full-Time Student funding mechanism and the competitive approach it creates.

4.14.   Where tertiary education funding has to be prioritised, prioritise funding of the public education sector (universities, Te Pūkenga, wānanga) and community based providers.

4.15.   Make funding for Private Training Establishments (PTEs) available where the PTE:

4.15.1.   Does not compete unfairly with the public sector, because of the target population or because of the subject matter taught; and

4.15.2.   Can demonstrate existing capacity to deliver high quality outcomes, value and performance.

4.16.   Require the inclusion of sustainable practices in all relevant courses purchased by the Tertiary Education Commission.

5. Accessible Tertiary Education

Issues

Disabled people remain underrepresented in tertiary education. Tertiary education providers should work to remove barriers to higher education for disabled people.

Actions

5.1. Be committed to international conventions protecting the rights of students with disabilities and fulfill all obligations required by the Human Rights Act 1993 and the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

5.2. Implement a Code of Practice to be adhered to by all tertiary institutions to ensure disabled students are provided with equitable opportunities to achieve their individual capabilities and participate in all aspects of tertiary education life.

5.3. Provide targeted funding for tertiary institutions to create an inclusive environment for students with disabilities by supporting disability and learning support services and ensuring staff are trained to meet students' needs.

5.4. Ensure graduates with disabilities receive support and assistance to move from tertiary education into employment.

5.5. Ensure that statistics are collected on the number, needs and performance of tertiary students with disabilities and that these inform planning and resource allocation.

See also our Disability Policy.

6. Export Education

Issues

The export education sector plays an important role in financially assisting tertiary providers, as well as contributing to the wider economy. Without careful planning, significant growth in export education could impact the quality of education that both domestic, and international students receive.

Actions

6.1. Monitor providers to make sure that international students receive a high standard of education and student support.

6.2. Assess the impact of the export education sector on domestic education.