

UNIT

Allocation Guidelines



NZEI · TE RIU ROA
NEW ZEALAND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE



These guidelines have been distributed to all primary and intermediate schools. Copies have been sent to each principal and NZEI site representative. Some schools will not receive units, or changes to their unit allocation when new units are available, but it is useful for all schools to think about how career structures might be created.



Unit Allocation Guidelines

These guidelines, jointly developed by NZEI Te Riu Roa, the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA) and the Ministry of Education arise from the 2007 terms of settlement of the Primary Teachers Collective Agreement (PTCA) to ensure that the agreed use of units is guided by and fits with the career pathways discussion and the work in the Longer Term Work Programme. They will guide schools through the process of developing, reviewing and updating their unit allocation policies. They have been written at the point when the unit entitlement for the primary sector is increasing by 5,000 from the beginning of 2009 and by a further 5,000 from the beginning of 2010.

They are intended to:

- Identify opportunities for schools to consider when thinking about unit allocation;
- Identify key principles that can guide decision making about the allocation of the new units;
- Provide information from the PTCA that must be considered when deciding upon the allocation.

Opportunities

The new units will give schools* an opportunity to consider how they create career pathways for teachers and to rethink the leadership roles they will need for the future. This is an opportunity to consider the ways that these units can best be allocated to distribute leadership and responsibility according to each school's strategic direction.

A starting point is the consideration of the school's current leadership roles and how the strategic direction of the school, and the career structure for teachers, can be enhanced by the new units.

These guidelines have been written to provide schools with support to enable them to achieve these goals, and to provide advice on a process that will ensure transparency, and involve all relevant stakeholders.

The focus is on the new units, but the advice in these guidelines is also intended to assist any decision making regarding units in the future.

**In the context of these guidelines the word 'school(s)' has been used as a generic term that incorporates teachers, principals and boards of trustees. Each has an important role to play in the process of designing a unit allocation policy. These roles are outlined in Appendix 1*



Important information for schools to consider

This section should be read in conjunction with the PTCA. In particular parts 2.2.1, 3.12 and 9 contain information about units.

Units and Career Paths

1. The new units are intended to remunerate teachers in leadership positions and positions of additional teaching and learning responsibility, and to support career pathways for primary teachers.
2. They should be allocated on the basis of leadership and responsibility, the needs of the school and with consideration of a career path within the school.
3. Most schools have traditional senior and middle management positions, such as deputy principal, assistant principal, syndicate leader and curriculum leader. They may, depending on their size, have a range of other roles such as special needs coordinators, mentors for other teachers, professional development coordinators and the like. The new units (in 2009 and 2010) offer schools the opportunity to create and remunerate positions that further develop leadership capacity to meet the needs of the school.
4. Developing career pathways, supported by unit allocation, will allow for the wider distribution of roles and responsibilities.
5. A key element in the allocation process is to ensure there are clear job descriptions for positions with units attached. These should be made available in advance of the distribution of the units to teachers. This allows for equitable and transparent decisions. The job description will form part of the future evaluation and appraisal of the performance of the unit holder. This practice should apply for both permanent and fixed-term units.

Permanent Units

6. The PTCA requires that a minimum of 60% of a school's unit entitlement is allocated to teachers permanently.
7. Permanent units are usually allocated for the traditional senior and middle management positions and, once allocated, become a part of a teacher's remuneration. Some of the new units will need to be permanent to maintain the 60% minimum.
8. Permanent units currently held by individuals can be added to but not taken away as part of the process of distributing these new units.

Note: *The new units, introduced in 2009/10, will enable the number of units to be held by individuals to be increased. This may be desirable to maintain or create relativities, and to make particular positions more desirable. It may also be possible to establish other roles as permanent. In both cases these decisions should reflect school policy.*

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Fixed-term Units

9. Fixed-term units should be allocated to individuals who are in genuine fixed-term roles – i.e. roles that will come to an end at a specified time or at the end of a specified event, such as leading a curriculum review.
10. The units should be associated with a job description and a clear process for performance management, so the tenure of the role should be sufficient to ensure the goals of the role can be met.

Unit Allocation Policy and Process (see Appendix 1)

11. Boards are notified of the unit entitlement for their school for the following year in the September staffing notices. The entitlement is calculated using a formula based on the number of full time equivalent teachers that each school is entitled to. Further information is available in the Funding, Staffing and Allowances Handbook published by the Ministry of Education.
12. It is a requirement of the PTCA that teaching staff are consulted in the development of a unit allocation policy or review of an existing policy. This is to ensure that the process is transparent.
13. Appendix 1 sets out a process to assist schools to manage the unit allocation process effectively.
14. Policies and procedures should be reviewed regularly. Factors that may prompt an early review of the unit allocation policy are: staff turnover, recruitment/retention issues, new education initiatives or changes to the school's unit entitlement.

Changes to Unit Entitlements

15. The number of units a school receives may change annually, depending on staffing. The unit policy needs to be flexible enough to allow for fluctuations. Part 9 of the PTCA has further information about unit reduction.

Operational nature of the policy

16. The policy is by nature an operational one and responsibility for preparing the unit allocation policy should be delegated to the principal and subsequently confirmed by the board.



Key Principles

The following six principles should underpin the development of a policy and associated procedures in order to determine how units should be allocated within a school:

- The unit allocation supports a logical and transparent career structure within the school.
- Units are allocated, and new roles created, on the basis of the identified needs of the school.
- Units are allocated to provide recognition and reward for leadership and management of teaching and learning, not simply workload.
- Allocation of units is based on objective criteria, i.e. to positions rather than to specific people holding positions.
- The teaching staff are consulted about the development or review of the unit allocation policy.
- The requirements of the PTCA are met.



Some Guiding Questions

The following questions have been designed to start discussion during the consultation process. They relate to opportunities to develop and enhance teaching and learning, and that can contribute to a career structure within the school.

Overview Questions

- What career structure does the school have now?
 - What career structure could the school have to support its strategic direction?
 - How will the new units be used to create that structure?
 - How will existing unit allocations and career structures be developed to achieve that structure?
 - How will the transition process be organised?

Questions to Facilitate Thinking and Discussion

- What roles within the school contribute to the leadership and development of teaching and learning?
- What leadership responsibilities are priorities for your school?
- What sort of roles in a career path could/should have units?
- What roles exist now that should have a unit but currently do not?
- What sort of roles would be given a fixed term unit?
- How will the school prioritise roles/responsibilities for unit allocation?
- How do these priorities relate to the school's strategic direction?
- How would they relate to each other to form a logical career path?
- Does the allocation recognise the importance of the responsibilities?
- What internal relativities need to be maintained?
- How might roles/tasks be distributed differently or more equitably?
- What consideration needs to be given to people currently holding roles?
- How will job descriptions be developed or reviewed for units or groups of units?
- Are there structures in comparable neighbouring schools that can be used to assist discussions?

Developing a Policy

These guidelines have set out key principles and considerations for development of a unit allocation policy.

Some of the matters that should be addressed in the policy and sets of procedures include:

- The priorities that have been determined for the allocation of both permanent and fixed-term units;
- The roles and responsibilities that will have units attached and the transition to those roles;
- The balance between permanent and fixed-term units;
- The process for appointing people to those positions;
- The process to be followed when the fixed-term expires;
- How changes will be dealt with, e.g. staff changes, reduced or increased unit allocation.

Details of the school's unit entitlement should be attached to the policy and updated annually.

As a first step the provisions of the PTCA relating to units should be read (particularly parts 2.2.1 and 3.12) as these set out the legal requirements.

The following is a suggested process that is in line with the key principles above.

1. Board Delegation to the Principal

The policy review, teacher consultation and unit allocation decision making is a responsibility that should be delegated to the principal by the board of trustees.

It is recommended that the principal brief the board prior to starting the process and that the delegation of authority and the briefing be recorded in the board minutes.

Before that meeting it would be useful for the principal to gather the following information to present to the board:

- A briefing on what units are and the purpose of the units.
- The current school policy on unit allocation.
- Where applicable, the estimated number of new units that the school will receive.
- How and when consultation with teaching staff will occur.



Developing a Policy

2. Consultation with Teachers

It is recommended that in undertaking the consultation process, principles from the Employment Court are used as a checklist (Appendix Two).

The consultation process will require meeting(s) with teaching staff. The principal should circulate information prior to the meetings. This information should include:

- The intended consultation process, including how and when it will occur;
- The school's current unit allocation policy;
- Relevant information about units and career pathways that teachers need in order to constructively participate in the consultation;
- The process for confirming the final decision on the school's unit allocation policy.

The centre pages of this booklet contain the principles that should underpin the development of the unit allocation policy and some questions to prompt discussion. The questions relate to considerations that should be included in discussion about career pathways and when designing a unit allocation policy. All teachers should have a copy of this information.

3. Confirming the Policy

The principal, in consultation with teachers, will be responsible for drafting the policy. Although consultation does not require consensus, teachers' views must be given consideration (see Appendix 2).

Once the policy is completed it should be confirmed and recorded in board minutes.

Reviewing the policy

A formal date for review should be included in the policy. It is recommended that during the development stage the review should take place within 12 months. The school policy should also include an indication of the triggers that may prompt an earlier review. They may include:

- Staff turnover;
- Recruitment/retention issues;
- New education initiatives;
- Changes to the school's unit entitlement.

Principles of Consultation

1. The word “consultation” does not require that there be agreement.
2. On the other hand, it clearly requires more than mere prior notification.
3. If there is a proposal to make a change, and such change requires to be preceded by consultation, it must not be made until after consultation with those required to be consulted. They “must know what is proposed before they can be expected to give their views”.
4. This does not involve a right to demand assurances, but there must be sufficiently precise information given to enable the person to be consulted to state a view together with a reasonable opportunity to do so. This may include an opportunity to state views in writing or orally.
5. The requirement for consultation is never to be treated perfunctorily or as a mere formality. The person or body to be consulted must be given a reasonably ample or sufficient opportunity to express views or to point to problems or difficulties: “they must be free to say what they think”.
6. Consultation must be allowed sufficient time.
7. Genuine effort must be made to accommodate the view of those being consulted; consultation is to be a reality, not a charade.
8. Consultation does not necessarily involve negotiation towards an agreement although this can follow as the tendency in consultation is to seek at least consensus.
9. Consulting involves the statement of a proposal not yet finally decided upon, listening to what others have to say, considering their responses, and then deciding what will be done.
10. The party obliged to consult, while quite entitled to have a working plan already in mind, must keep its mind open and be ready to change and even start afresh.
11. There are no universal requirements as to form or as to duration of consultation.
12. Consultation cannot be equated with negotiation in the sense of a process which has, as its subject, arriving at agreement.

CEWU v Telecom 1993 (Employment Court)



FAQs

■ **What happens to existing permanent unit holders when the school receives new units?**

Once allocated on a permanent basis, a unit becomes part of a teacher's remuneration. Permanent units cannot be taken off teachers to whom they have been allocated other than in circumstances provided for in the PTCA such as where the school's unit entitlement has been reduced or when the teacher voluntarily relinquishes the unit(s). The process to follow when the school's unit entitlement is reduced is outlined in part 9 of the PTCA.

■ **How do payments for recruitment, retention and responsibility fit in with units?**

Clause 3.28 of the PTCA allows for additional remuneration in the form of 'Payments for Recruitment, Retention and Responsibility', commonly referred to as '3R payments' or 'RRR payments'. These are not units and should not be confused with units. Payments for Recruitment, Retention and Responsibility are entirely board funded from the school's operational or other internal funding, they are not centrally funded.

■ **Why does my school refer to different types of units?**

When units were initially allocated to the primary sector they were delivered as 'M' units (management units) and 'R' units (recruitment units). These distinctions and designations no longer apply – the school simply receives an entitlement number of units to apply in accordance with their unit allocation policy.

■ **What are units for attached teachers?**

Resource teachers, employed by schools as attached teachers, are entitled to a unit(s) as part of their remuneration package. These additional units are delivered directly to these teachers as remuneration and do not come out of the school's unit entitlement which is generated by full time teacher equivalent staffing numbers.

■ **Will resource teachers get the new units?**

Resource teachers do not receive their units from the school's unit entitlement. They are not included in the unit formula calculations so they do not have access to units from the school's entitlement. This includes the new units introduced in 2009 and 2010.



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