



PLUMBING, GASFITTING & DRAINLAYING (PGD)

Advice to the Tertiary Education Commission
for training investment in 2026

November 2024



WAIHANGA ARA RAU

Construction and
Infrastructure

Workforce Development Council



KEY INFORMATION – 2026 TEC INVESTMENT ADVICE

This information is part of a suite of documents relating to the Waihanga Ara Rau advice to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) for investment in training for 2026 it should be read in conjunction with the following:

- ▶ **Introduction to the Waihanga Ara Rau advice to TEC for investment in training for 2026.**

This document includes the methodology behind the learner forecasts and industry narrative, including context and themes related to the advice.

- ▶ **The sector-specific advice summaries for the other 11 strategic industry sectors.**

These documents include sector data snapshot, industry-specific context information, learner number profiles, and 2024 Learner and Provider snapshot.

- ▶ **The complete Waihanga Ara Rau advice to TEC for investment in training for 2026.**

INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

23,793

workforce

2022

6,000

businesses

2022

7,695

learners

2023

\$212B

5-year project
pipeline

WIP September 2024

22%

workforce
<1 year in industry

PLUMBING, GASFITTING & DRAINLAYING (PGD) NARRATIVE

While the overarching project pipeline for construction provides a context for the sector's activity, we have seen a different profile of learner numbers for PGD. While most of the construction sector has seen a decline in learner numbers since December 2022, PGD learner numbers peaked in 2023 and have remained strong in 2024. Based on this profile with the forecast improvement in the construction sector (as noted above), we are forecasting a continued increase in PGD learner numbers through to and including 2026, which will see 2026 reflect 2023 numbers.

Investment Advice Table

In our 2023 supplementary and in cycle advice, we asked the TEC to give effect to a freeze on funding for the [2660] New Zealand Certificate in Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying (Level 3) at 2023 levels. Evidence from Nga Kete (4/9/24) indicates that there have been **505 learners for the 2024 year to date**, this equates to an increase of 90 (+21.7%) learners on the 415 full year learner count for 2023. Interim data suggests that to date six delivery sites have exceeded 2023 delivery volumes, three have maintained them and four have reduced them, meaning there are compliant sites masking the true increase at non-compliant sites with two sites increasing delivery by 100% in 2024 over 2023. Please note that data from one provider/site is suppressed for 2023 suggesting the volume of delivery in 2024 already exceeds a 100% increase in learner numbers.

We need TEC to give effect to our previous advice and address provider non-compliance in 2024.

In line with supplementary advice for 2025:

- ▶ Limit providers to one Level 3 programme per provider, or provider delivery site, per year. This would effectively reduce the current cap further and support those providers that are investing in new delivery sites or facilities while freeing up capacity to deliver Level 4 block courses.
- ▶ Providers do not receive TEC funding for any over duration apprentices. Previously this would have been monitored through 'offsets' but this doesn't appear to be a mechanism in the current funding system. The perception therefore is that there are currently no financial incentives for reducing the over duration issue.
- ▶ That TEC specifically monitors over duration and programme completion rates for Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying programmes to ensure that apprentices are more likely to achieve their programme/s on time through the achievement of a minimum of 75 credits per year.
- ▶ That apprentices are not charged provider fees post their normal duration.

More detailed information is provided for PGD to support the above point. Although, we are currently not proposing any changes for 2026, but ongoing industry consultation may indicate a need for adjustments.

TEC INVESTMENT ADVICE

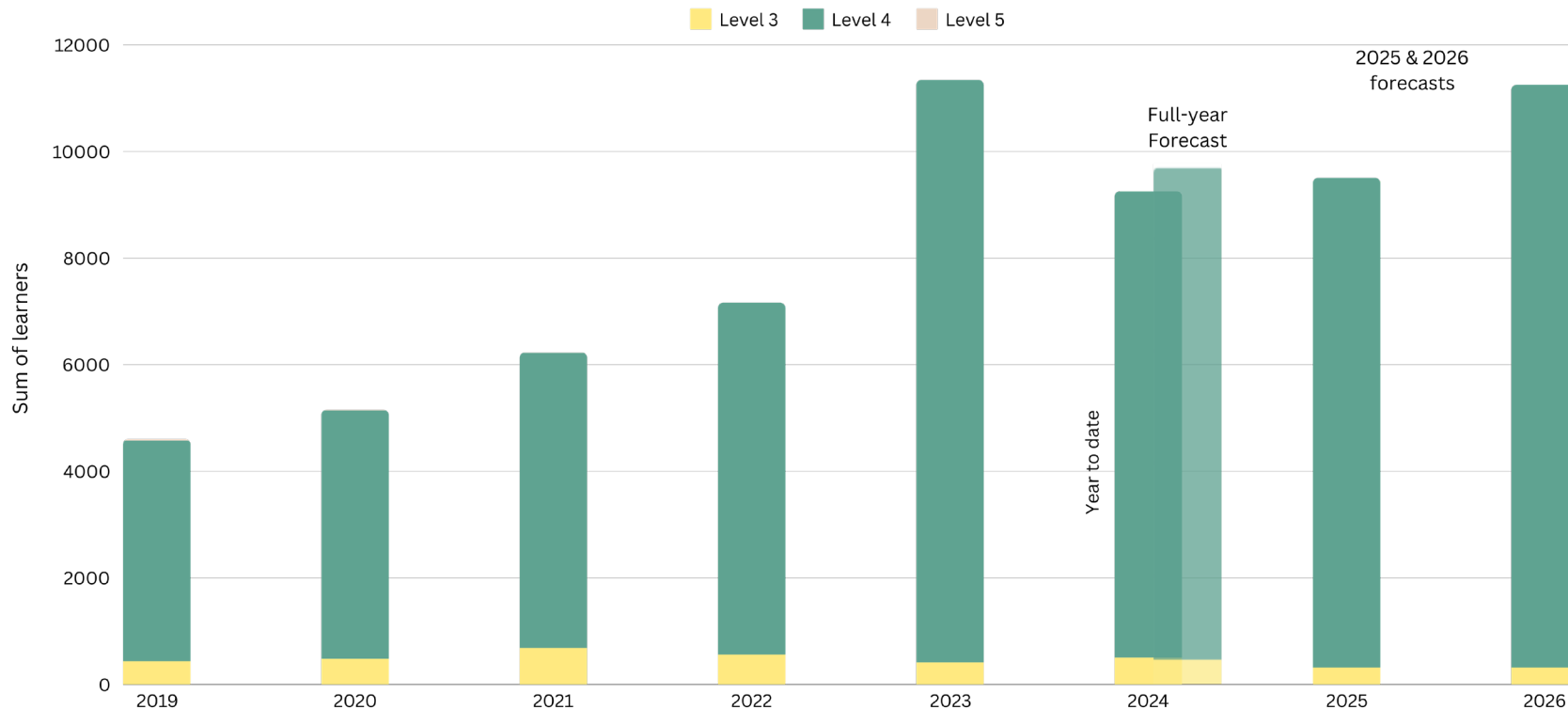
What is our baseline year and the training narrative/forecast?

We are using **2023 learner numbers as our baseline**, as this is the latest full-year training data.

While training interventions such as apprentice boost and fees free were still influencing learner numbers and the five-year pipeline of work was only just coming off its all-time high of approx. \$300B total \$251B construction specific in December 2022 learner numbers were starting to fall during 2023. Learner numbers in most industry sectors have continued to fall in 2024, but we anticipate government investment indicators and a falling Official Cash Rate (OCR) will see 2024 as the bottom of the training volume trough in both the civil infrastructure and construction sectors with enrolments building in 2025.

The 2026 projected learners numbers for construction reflect an expectation that 2024 will see the bottom of the trough in learner numbers which will start to rebound in 2025 and be back to 2023 levels in 2026, as highlighted above in the Construction five-year rolling Project Pipeline value nationally (2020 – 2026). Please note that the Qualification codes and corresponding qualifications are shown in the *Investment Advice table* below.

Actual and forecast learner numbers to September 2024 year to date and three-year forecast training numbers based on workforce indicators



Investment Advice Table

Level	Code	Qualification or credential name	Mode	Region	2023 Learners	2026 Advice Provision	
3	2660 ¹	New Zealand Certificate in Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying (Level 3)	<i>Off Job</i>	National	415	280 <i>approx. based on calculation</i>	
4	2663	New Zealand Certificate in Plumbing (Level 4)	<i>Preference for WBL</i>		3,100	3,100	
	2662	New Zealand Certificate in Gasfitting (Level 4)			430	430	
	2661	New Zealand Certificate in Drainlaying (Level 4)			3,220	3,220	
	-	² Other Level 4 Programmes			4,180	4,180	
5	3838	3838 New Zealand Certificate in Plumbing (Level 5)	<i>Preference for WBL</i>		0	0	
	3839	3840 New Zealand Certificate in Gasfitting (Level 5)			0	0	
	3840	3839 New Zealand Certificate in Drainlaying (Level 5)			0	0	
Total						11,345	11,210

Shaded cells in 2026 column represent changes to qualification provision which we reflected in our formal advice to TEC (see “Advice to TEC for construction and infrastructure training investment 2025”).

¹ **Ref:2660** Please note the reduced cap model of one Level 3 programme per provider, or provider delivery site, per year would translate to approximately 280 learners or a reduction of 135 over 2023.

² Many programmes at Level 4 include coverage of multiple qualifications e.g. Plumbing and Gasfitting so numbers cannot be provided for individual qualifications.

2024 Learner Snapshot

Age		Region		Gender	
Under 25	59%	Auckland	34%	Female	3%
25 – 39	36%	Wellington	20%	Male	97%
40 plus	5%	Waikato	12%		
		Canterbury	9%		

NEW QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDENTIALS

Area of provision and/or qualification/ credential name (if known)	Level	Mode (if specific)	Qualification or micro-credential	Estimated date it will be available	Description
Public Health – Hydraulic Engineering	TBC	TBC	TBC	2026	To provide in-depth knowledge of the science and engineering associated with protecting the public health of building occupants, i.e. large commercial hospitals.