



Tertiary Education Policy

Vision

The Green Party envisions a tertiary sector that is well-resourced, vibrant, and innovative – one that is responsive to the needs of students, the evolving needs of our society, and the health of the biosphere. Mātauranga Māori is championed and cultural, sexual, gender, disability, religious and all other forms of diversity of students and staff is celebrated.

Key Principles

1. Tertiary education, and tertiary education institutions themselves, are primarily a public good, and should be resourced based on that understanding.
2. Access to tertiary education should be equitable.
3. Education should be of high quality and focussed on the aspirations of the students and their current and future needs in a changing world.
4. 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.
5. The education system should respect and reflect cultural diversity and the diverse needs of those of different ages, outlooks and abilities.
6. Cooperation, not competition, should be fostered between all education providers.
7. Tertiary educators and related staff should be valued as professionals and supported accordingly.
8. Tertiary sector research is autonomous and should receive active support from Government where it contributes to the public good.

Specific Policy Points

1 Ensuring Relevance

Students should be provided with an education and set of experiences that will help them understand and deal with the complex world they are inheriting.

Policy Positions

- 1.1 Work to embed sustainability across the curriculum in order to:
 - a) Improve the quality and relevance of education for all enrolled students
 - b) Better prepare domestic students for meaningful work at home and abroad
 - c) Strengthen offerings to attract international students in a competitive international education marketplace

2 Honouring Te Tiriti

Policy Positions

- 2.1 Work with Tangata Whenua to provide high quality and accessible tertiary education services for Māori, including initiatives for alternative education approaches that are effective in delivering services to Māori.

3 Research and Governance

Policy Positions

- 3.1 Undertake a comprehensive review of the Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF) model and investigate the merits of alternative funding streams.
- 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

A. Loan Repayment

Student debt acts as a barrier to entering, fully participating in and completing education for many New Zealanders.

Policy Positions

- 1.1 Explore options to introduce a debt write-off scheme that limits the individual burden of debt while incentivising graduates to contribute to New Zealand.
- 1.2 Ensure that repayment rates reflect borrowers' ability to repay by adjusting the repayment thresholds, and introduce a progressive repayment scheme.
- 1.3 Lengthen the repayment holiday for overseas borrowers to reflect the typical time spent by graduates overseas.
- 1.4 Explore repayment incentive options, such as a voluntary repayment bonus scheme or reduced interest sector bonding scheme.
- 1.5 Support keeping the current zero-interest scheme.

B. Student Financial Support

One of the significant barriers to participation in tertiary education is the lack of financial support while studying.

Policy Positions

- 1.6 Review the levels of Living Costs, Course-related costs, Student Allowances, and relevant welfare benefits to ensure they are equitable and at a liveable level
- 1.7 Work towards a universal student allowance, by progressively reducing the age at which students cease to be means tested on their parents' income and raising the parental income threshold.
- 1.8 Ensure that the amount a student can earn per week without impacting on their eligibility for a Student Allowance is based on average weekly income, and not on income in any one week.
- 1.9 Improve access to the Independent Circumstances Allowance.
- 1.10 Ensure equitable access to financial support, including student allowances, living costs, course-related costs, and the student loan scheme, including for part-time, post-graduate and mature students.

C. Fees and University Funding

Policy Positions

- 1.11 Work towards establishing a public 'fee-free' tertiary education system.
- 1.12 Cap and then progressively reduce student fees.

- 1.13 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.
- 1.14 Investigate bonding, or other mechanisms of contribution, in exchange for fee-free tertiary education.
- 1.15 Explore alternatives to the Equivalent Full-Time Student funding mechanism and the competitive approach it creates.
- 1.16 Review current funding to tertiary institutions to ensure that subsidies are sufficient to meet real costs and to provide sufficient funding to:
 - a) Improve staff to student ratios;
 - b) Improve library resources and staffing;
 - c) Improve staff wellbeing, recruitment and retention, including of specialised professional and academic staff;
 - d) Improve the range of course offerings in subject areas where lack of financial resourcing has been the main reason for their decline;
 - e) Improve Māori and Pasifika access and outcomes, including through more equitable funding of wananga;
 - f) Ensure reasonable access to learning or vocational opportunities at a range of levels in regional centres;
 - g) Deliver a wide range of up-to-date courses targeting evolving social and ecological issues and key skills shortages in Aotearoa.

D. Private Training Establishments (PTEs)

Policy Positions

- 1.17 Where tertiary education funding has to be prioritised it should be directed in the first instance to the public education sector (universities, polytechnics, wānanga) and community based providers.
- 1.18 Funding for PTEs should be available where the PTE:
 - a) Does not compete unfairly with the public sector, because of the target population or because of the subject matter taught; and
 - b) Can demonstrate existing capacity to deliver high quality outcomes, value and performance.
- 1.19 Funding cycles for PTEs should reflect the length of the study programmes they offer.

5 Accessible Tertiary Education

Policy Positions

- 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 students with disabilities 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 (see our [Disability](#) policy).
- 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.

6 Export Education

The export education sector plays an important role in financially assisting tertiary providers, as well as contributing to the wider economy.

Policy Positions

- 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.