



PPTA TE WEHENGARUA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2017

CAREERS SERVICES IN DANGER



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This paper highlights a number of current threats to the provision of adequate careers services in secondary schools, caused by the absorption of Careers New Zealand (Careers NZ) into the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), and continued pressure on school staffing and funding leading to reductions in specialist staffing for careers. In some schools, this has translated into expectations that form teachers pick up parts of the careers advice role but without adequate specialist support. The recommendations build on existing policy, listed in section 8, and urge action by the Ministry of Education, by schools, and through the 2018 collective agreement round.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the report be received.
2. That PPTA executive consider the development of claims for the 2018 Secondary Teachers Collective Agreement (STCA) round that would better reward careers team leaders in terms of pay and time.
3. That schools be encouraged to require their careers team leaders to belong to a relevant professional association such as CATE (Careers and Transition Educators) or CDANZ (Career Development Association of NZ).
4. That PPTA urge the Ministry of Education to require schools to use the careers information grant for its intended purpose, for careers development work.
5. That PPTA urge the Ministry of Education to develop comprehensive guidance to schools on best practice in careers education, including advocating the use of the careers education benchmarks as a self-review tool.

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INTRODUCTION

Careers advisers in schools are an essential part of the school's student guidance system, but they are becoming an increasingly fragile and threatened resource.

This paper outlines some of the threats careers advisers face, discusses why this matters to all teachers, and proposes some recommendations for PPTA action.

1. THREAT 1: THE PARADIGM SHIFT IN SCHOOLS

- 1.1. A PPTA annual conference paper in 2012, *Managing the paradigm shift: Secondary schooling and change*, pointed to rapid change in expectations on form teachers, with many schools renaming the role to titles such as “learning adviser, tutor, academic counsellor or academic mentor”. Along with these title changes the association was seeing new expectations that teachers guide students along their “learning journey”, including setting academic goals with a view to their eventual destinations beyond school. More recently a new title has been added to that list, “achievement and retention teacher”, which no doubt comes from the government project of that name that pressures schools to raise students’ Level 2 NCEA achievement.
- 1.2. While it is very beneficial for all teachers to take an active interest in their students’ career journeys, they should not be expected to be doing this in a vacuum.
- 1.3. The Secondary Career Development Benchmarks, which were developed by Careers NZ in 2011 and reviewed and updated in 2014 and again in 2016, envisage careers as a whole school system, with strong commitment and leadership from the senior leadership team, a career development team with an expert careers team leader with specialist qualifications and other career development staff. The career development team would provide professional learning and development (PLD) and advice for other staff to enable them to be part of the career development support for students.
- 1.4. The Education Review Office in their last full review of careers advice in schools in 2012,¹ identified four different types of careers information, advice, guidance and education (CIAGE) in the schools they studied. Out of 44 secondary and area schools sampled, only four had stand-out systems. These were described as having “innovative school-wide approaches to student futures”. A further 17 schools were described as “conventional” and providing “some opportunities for students in CIAGE... driven by the school’s careers department and did not extend across the school’s curriculum departments”. The other 23 schools were described as “developing” or “low quality” in their careers services.
- 1.5. Not a lot is likely to have improved in this area since 2012, given the uncertainty that Careers NZ has faced recently, and because of other trends identified in this paper. While Careers NZ still provides some PLD for careers advisers, they no longer provide training or induction programmes for new careers advisers. In 2016 and 2017, the

¹ [Careers Information, Advice, Guidance and Education \(CIAGE\) in Secondary Schools](#) – Education Review Office (ERO)

subject association, Careers and Transition Educators (CATE), has partnered with Careers NZ to jointly facilitate workshops for new careers team leaders to fill this gap.

- 1.6. Some careers advisers fear that they are becoming an endangered species, with increasing numbers of secondary schools moving to handing over their work to teachers, or to private providers (see below).

2. THREAT 2: CAREERS NZ ABSORBED INTO TEC

- 2.1 As a result of the government's Education Update Act 2017, Careers NZ became part of the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) on 1 July 2017.
- 2.2 Over recent years, Careers NZ has moved from being an organisation with significant involvement in providing advice and PLD to schools to one that is not much more than a website.
- 2.3 It is unlikely that its positioning as part of TEC, an organisation that is largely a funding agency for tertiary, will result in it returning to being a service with face-to-face outreach to schools.
- 2.4 PPTA was part of a careers services working group with the Ministry of Education between November 2016 and January 2017 discussing what careers functions the ministry might need to take on when the shift of Careers NZ to TEC happened. The minister had asked them for advice as to how they could build careers work through Communities of Learning, but officials were told quite firmly that Communities of Learning were not the answer to everything.
- 2.5 The working group was very clear that there was a need for a lot more than a careers website, however up to date the information it carried might be. We also advised the ministry that the careers benchmarks provided excellent guidance as to the ideal approach to careers in a school, and that this needed to be properly resourced in terms of money and people.
- 2.6 At the time of writing, PPTA has seen no evidence of progress by the ministry in this area, however there are indications that they may take some responsibility for careers work in schools in the future.

3. THREAT 3: PRIVATISATION OF CAREERS ADVICE

- 3.1 Over recent years PPTA has heard of instances where schools have contracted with private providers of "careers advice" to come into the school for a few hours a week to "counsel" students about careers options. Some of these "private practitioners" are trained but many are not. This kind of model means that instead of students having an ongoing relationship with a careers adviser who is a trained teacher and part of the school's guidance system, they simply consult an outside person who knows nothing about them and provides advice in a vacuum.
- 3.2 Some of these private practitioners are also very expensive. It is PPTA's view that these kinds of arrangements are very poor use of a school's money.

4. THREAT 4: LACK OF TIME FOR CAREERS WORK

4.1 CATE surveys of their members indicate that time is the resource that is most lacking for careers team leaders. They are expected to do a number of roles in their schools including:

- Student advice and guidance (especially to priority learners and students "at risk")
- Managing budgets and a team
- Providing careers PLD to form teachers/learning coaches/mentors
- Managing trades academies students
- Managing Gateway and STAR programmes
- Overseeing Vocational Pathways implementation
- Meeting with parents
- Attending updates from trades and tertiary providers
- Arranging careers expos and fieldtrips to careers events.

4.2 They do this while coping with what may be quite a large teaching load as well.

5. THREAT 5: DEMISE OF POST-GRADUATE QUALIFICATIONS FOR CAREERS ADVISERS

5.1 One of the quality markers identified in the careers benchmarks is that the careers team leader "has a Level 7 career-specific qualification". A note in the benchmarks reads:

Proponents of a minimum Level 7 qualification have argued the complexity of working in career services requires skills currently developed at postgraduate level. International research also highlights the growing number of countries moving towards postgraduate-level training for career professionals. Furbish (2011) argues for professional standards and notes that the minimum requirements in Aotearoa New Zealand are well below other similar countries.²

5.2 Careers team leaders' options for gaining even this minimum Level 7 qualification have recently been reduced dramatically to one online course run by Nelson-Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT). A course offered by Auckland University of Technology (AUT) has ceased to be offered.

6. CURRENT RESOURCING FOR CAREERS

6.1 The STCA provides for a careers adviser allowance of \$1500 per annum, which is payable at that rate regardless of whether the incumbent is full- or part-time. It can also be paid on top of any units held. There is no other resourcing provided through the collective agreement. This allowance is less than half the rate for one unit, which seems ludicrous given the importance of the role.

² [Career Development Benchmarks: Secondary](#) p.26 – Careers NZ

- 6.2 Schools also receive a careers information grant through their operations grant. The calculation for the quantum of this grant uses the school's decile to determine the relevant per-pupil rate, and is paid on the total number of students enrolled in years 9 to 13.
- 6.3 This grant ranges from \$32.77 per pupil at decile 1 to \$13.49 at decile 10 (GST excl.).
- 6.4 However, like most of schools' operational funding, it is not tagged, and a school does not have to account for their spending of the careers information grant. Careers advisers have complained for many years that in some schools, they are not told the exact amount of grant that has been received, and don't necessarily have access to all of it to spend on careers functions.

7. THE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

- 7.1 Until the passing of the Education Update Act, schools were obliged under National Administration Guideline (NAG) 1f to:

... provide appropriate career education and guidance for all students in year 7 and above, with a particular emphasis on specific career guidance for those students who have been identified by the school as being at risk of leaving school unprepared for the transition to the workplace or further education/training.

- 7.2 Currently this NAG continues to be in force until the government publishes a Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities and "planning and reporting guidelines", which will eventually replace the National Education Guidelines (NEGs) and NAGs. Whether this new framework will include a statement about careers is as yet unclear, however as one of the objectives of education under the updated act is "preparedness for work", it seems reasonable to expect there to be something similar to NAG 1f. Change in this area will not happen fast, and possibly not take effect till the beginning of 2019.
- 7.3 The Education Review Office's evaluation indicators make only one reference that is relevant to careers, that students "determine and participate in coherent education pathways that connect to further education or employment" (Outcome Indicators, under A Successful Lifelong Learner, p.17).³

8. EXISTING PPTA POLICY ON CAREERS

- 8.1 There appears not to have been a PPTA annual conference paper specifically on the subject of careers for many years, if ever, so this is an important paper.
- 8.2 However, there were recommendations on careers matters included in the 2011 paper 'Accelerated change in the senior secondary school', as follows:

³[School Evaluation Indicators: Effective Practice for Improvement and Learner Success \(PDF\)](#) – ERO

- That PPTA urge government to ensure that all careers advisers are:
 - Able to access the financial resource that has been allocated for that purpose,
 - Are given adequate time to do the job, and
 - Are properly provided with quality professional learning and development.
- That PPTA urge government to increase the careers information grant to secondary schools.
- That PPTA urge government to provide resources and staffing to ensure that the academic counselling and pathways advice given to students is up to date and accurate, whether it is delivered by careers advisers, deans, or other teachers.

8.3 These were all passed at that conference, and therefore form existing policy and do not need to be voted on again. The recommendations in this paper would add to this body of policy.

9. THE RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 RECOMMENDATION 2

It is clear that there is nowhere near enough time and money available in schools to support high quality careers work. As a minimum, the careers team leader ought to have a full unit, or an allowance to the value of a unit, and a time allowance that is not at the whim of their leadership team. A roll-based allowance with time is probably necessary. However, it will be up to the executive to determine, after consultation with members, the exact structuring of a claim and where support for careers work fits in the priorities.

9.2 RECOMMENDATION 3

Careers team leaders can be very isolated in schools, and the support and learning that comes from membership of a professional association is very important. CATE is the careers teachers' subject association, and it runs an annual conference and regional workshops from time to time. CDANZ is an organisation that includes careers professionals outside of schools as well, and it offers different levels of membership depending on experience and qualifications. The recommendation deliberately uses the term "require" in relation to membership, because a BOT requirement of this kind triggers Clause 7.6.1 of the collective agreement which means that the subscription is paid by the school, not the individual.

9.3 RECOMMENDATION 4

Very little school funding is "tagged", i.e. required to be used for the purpose for which it is granted. However, there are too many reports of misuse of the careers information grant for this funding to be left untagged. The amount of money schools receive in this grant is not huge, but it should at least be required to be used as intended.

9.4 RECOMMENDATION 5

It is not clear at the time of writing the extent to which the Ministry of Education will take up a responsibility for careers work within schools, now that Careers NZ has been absorbed into TEC. Schools need the ministry to provide clear guidance about what a high quality whole school approach to careers development, including a well-resourced

careers team, looks like. The secondary careers development benchmarks are a useful starting point for this.

What the status of the benchmarks will be with the absorption of Careers NZ into TEC is far from clear. At the time of writing this paper, they sit on the Careers NZ website (which is apparently to continue as a separate website from TEC's). It is vital that the Ministry of Education highlight their value.