

03 November 2022

C156964

I Brown

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Tēnā koe

Thank you for your request, via the FYI website, to the Department of Corrections – Ara Poutama Aotearoa on 27 August 2022, requesting information about the provision of educational courses and vocational programmes in prisons. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

I will address each of your requests in turn. You requested:

1. *A list of all educational programmes, courses, opportunities, or any other format or type (hereafter 'programme'), available to inmates in New Zealand prisons for each of 2018, 2019, 2021, and 2022 including:*
  - a. *The name, type, subject matter, and organisational provider, of each programme;*

The majority of people in prison have no formal qualifications and limited education or work experience prior to coming to prison. However, Corrections acknowledges the importance of working with individuals from their arrival into prison to ensure their needs are addressed and their reintegration is supported. Our interventions range in intensity and length to meet a variety of needs and include education, employment, and rehabilitation initiatives.

Some of the programmes and courses on offer at prisons have been impacted by COVID-19 and staffing constraints. COVID-19 stressors and border closures and re-openings, combined with labour shortages across the country, have made it more challenging for us to recruit and retain frontline staff. To respond to our staffing requirements, we have been consolidating the prison population into fewer units, which has allowed us to deploy our staff more effectively. At the same time, we are undertaking a national recruitment drive and progressing a number of staff retention initiatives. This will provide options for resuming programmes and services that have previously been on hold, alongside increasing access to out-of-cell activities across prisons.

Corrections holds information about educational programmes and interventions, which is categorised as:

- Intensive Literacy and Numeracy (ILN) – A programme to help learners with low literacy or numeracy (Step 3 or below on the Literacy and Numeracy Adult Assessment Tool) to improve their literacy and numeracy up to Step 4 or above.
- Industry Qualification Training – Industry-based training that occurs alongside work in one of the prison industries, and leads to completion of unit standards or qualifications in that industry.
- Vocational Short Courses – Short courses that can be completed in a few hours or 1-2 days and are usually practical and workplace focused. This can include first aid, forklift driving, and health and safety courses
- Tertiary Educational Courses (TEC) – Courses at the Tertiary level that are typically 12-18 weeks in length and contribute to a qualification at level 3 or above on the NZQF.
- Self-Directed Learning (SDL) – Correspondence/distance learning through an external education provider. May be at Secondary or Tertiary level.
- Secure Online Learning (SOL) – Access to the computer suites in a prison that provide opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy or digital literacy skills, and opportunities to complete driver license theory training, or search for potential jobs under secure conditions and close supervision.

Each of these programmes is delivered by numerous different providers across all prisons. Providing a list of all programmes' educational providers would require the assessment of a large quantity of data. This part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

*b. The name of the prison or prisons in which each programme is available;*

A list of programmes, broken down by the prison at which they are run, is attached as Appendix 1. Please note that information regarding Auckland South Corrections Facility (ASCF) has not been provided as ASCF is managed by Serco, not Corrections.

Additionally, you will note that Mt Eden Corrections Facility (MECF) does not appear in the Industrial Qualification Training or TEC Delivery tables. This is because MECF is a remand prison, and the turnover of people on remand is too high for meaningful engagement with these programmes to be possible.

*c. Whether it is available to remand prisoners, serving prisoners, or both*

All courses are ordinarily available to sentenced individuals across all prisons where the programmes are offered notwithstanding the difficulties posed by the COVID-19 response and current staffing challenges.

As you may be aware, there are two types of remand prisoners:

- Remand accused: a person who has not yet been found (or pleaded) guilty of the charge(s) laid against them; and

- **Remand convicted:** a person who has been found (or pleaded) guilty of the charge(s) laid against them, but the sentence they are to serve has not yet been determined by the courts.

Remand accused people are required to be kept separate from sentenced prisoners. Some prisons house a higher proportion of remand prisoners, while others house primarily sentenced prisoners. The amount of time a person spends on remand is dependent on how long it takes for the judicial process to be completed by the Courts and is influenced by factors including the complexity of the case and the plea entered.

There are challenges in delivering educational and vocational programmes to people on remand, including the unknown length of time that the individual will spend in prison. Some people only stay on remand for a few days or weeks, while others stay on remand for lengthier periods of time.

However, Corrections acknowledges the importance of working with people on remand from their arrival into prison to ensure their needs are addressed and their reintegration is supported. Each person on remand is allocated a Case Manager once they have been on remand for more than ten working days. Their Case Manager works directly with them to assess and identify specific areas to learn new skills and ensure their time in prison is used to their benefit. These plans could include learning skills such as parenting, managing money and basic living skills, as well as planning for a safe release to community. Remand prisoners also receive help with addiction, education and finding employment.

Please see Appendix 2 for details of courses available to remand accused individuals across all sites with the exception of ASCF, which is managed by Serco, not Corrections. Remand convicted individuals, as they have been convicted of an offence, are generally offered the same courses as sentenced prisoners.

*d. If a programme is run more than once per year, the number of times per year at each prison where it is run; and*

*e. The capacity of each programme both per individual programme run and per year, in each prison where the programme is available;*

Please see the below table for details on the frequency of each programme type and its capacity.

<b>Education programme / intervention</b>	<b>How often does it run?</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
<b>Intensive Literacy and Numeracy</b>	Learners may start as soon as scheduling on their site allows. Multiple classes may be running at any one time at a prison.	Class sizes are intended to be a maximum of six.
<b>Vocational Short courses</b>	Each site schedules vocational short courses as demand requires. Learners may start as soon as scheduling on their site allows.	Group sizes are dependent on the individual course and

		educational provider requirements.
<b>TEC delivery</b>	Course start dates are negotiated between each prison site and the external provider, and are dependent on teacher availability, the length of the course, and operational constraints. The number of times per year that a course is offered on a prison site vary according to these factors.	Group sizes are dependent on the individual course and educational provider requirements.
<b>Industry Qualification Training</b>	Learners can be enrolled to complete industry qualification standards at any time, there are no specific course start dates.	Learning in this space is individual, not class based so there is no set limit.
<b>Self-Directed Learning (SDL)</b>	Learners can enrol at any time with an external learning provider and start dates will be based on the external providers course dates.	Learning in this space is individual, not class based so there is no set limit.
<b>Secure Online Learning (SOL)</b>	Waitlists for this programme run continuously. Learners may start as soon as scheduling on their site allows. There is no set programme/course – each learner has individual learning goals so the length of time they attend SOL will vary.	A maximum of 10 learners in each SOL classroom, however multiple classes may be running during each week at each prison.

*f. Respectively, the numbers of prisoners that enrol in, attend, and complete successfully, each programme listed, both nationally and at each institution where that programme is available, per year.*

Please see Appendix 3 for the number of unique people who started an education programme each financial year and the number of times each person attended an education programme each financial year.

A person can be recorded as attending a programme they started in a previous financial year or can be recorded as attending a programme multiple times.

Corrections does not hold data on learners who successfully complete each course recorded, as this is individually held externally by each education provider. This part of your request is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the OIA, as the information requested is not held by Corrections, and we have no grounds for believing that it is held by another agency or more closely connected with the functions of another agency.

Please note that this response may be published on Corrections' website. Typically, responses are published quarterly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

I trust the information provided is of assistance. I encourage you to raise any concerns about this response with Corrections. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Ngā mihi



Leigh Marsh

Acting National Commissioner