

# Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu

Mentor Handbook



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“The preparation of teachers for secondary schools depends on a shared responsibility between teacher educators and expert practitioners in the workplace who share a common mission and commitment”

(NZTC Initial Teacher Education requirements, p. 2)

## Overview

The purpose of the Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu programme is to contribute to the reduction in educational inequality in Aotearoa New Zealand. It aims to achieve this by supporting exceptional individuals to enter teaching, while developing reflective contemporary practice and leadership skills to address inequality in the classroom, across schools and beyond schools in the long-term.

The key points of difference of this pathway into teaching are that the programme is employment-based and that the programme is specifically targeted to address disparity in achievement.

One of the key sources of support for our participants on the programme is the In-School Mentor. The mentor is generally an experienced teacher, often in the same subject area as the participant, selected primarily for their pedagogical teacher expertise (rather than subject area experience), and for their active interest in acquiring the knowledge and skills to become effective mentors.

The Education Council's vision statement for mentoring is as follows:

An effective mentor is a reflective practitioner focused on inquiry into their own and others' professional practice and learning - based on a clear understanding of outstanding teaching.

An effective mentor has a significant educative leadership role, dedicated to growing the professional capability of the colleagues they support.

An effective mentor has a sound knowledge and skill base for their role and can establish respectful and effective mentoring relationships. An effective mentor does not work in isolation. Mentors can only be effective if they are providing mentoring as part of a comprehensive induction programme and are well supported by their employer, professional leader, and professional learning community.

<https://educationcouncil.org.nz/content/guidelines-induction-and-mentoring-and-mentor-teachers-html-version#Section2>

Research for best practice tells us that effective mentors:

- Cultivate a wide range of effective strategies to support learning dialogue/ coaching conversations;
- Give feedback and feedforward regularly;
- Share key learning experiences from their own development;
- Understand and show the connection between theory and practice;
- Foster safe spaces in which mentees can ask questions;
- Monitor their own workload and their mentees;
- Set regular times for learning dialogue (coaching conversations) to occur;
- Help their mentees set and work towards goals;
- Articulates clear expectations for themselves and their mentees;
- Listen and reflect; and
- See their mentoring experience as a contribution to their own professional development.

(adapted from *Five Habits for Effective Mentors*, 2012)

## Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu – Mentoring Context

Mentoring forms a key component of the Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu programme. The benefits of mentoring beginning teachers include “reduced feelings of isolation, increased confidence and self-esteem, professional growth, and improved self-reflection and problem-solving capacities” (PGDipTchg(SecFB)Section B, 2012, p. 8-9). Five Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu cohorts on, these remain essential qualities for our teachers due to the nature of the steep learning curve in their first two years in the classroom.

Revisiting the Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu programme in light of the new partnership with The Mindlab by Unitec, has allowed the opportunity to strengthen aspects of the delivery including the training of mentors and the overall nature and structure of support offered to our participants.

### Best Practice

The Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu programme has adopted and adapted the principles garnered in our literature review for best practice in teacher mentoring and our experience over the past five years.

Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu operates as a community of learners and we are committed to, what Whatman and Macdonald describe as “a reconceptualization of ITE as learning community” and mentoring as a “reciprocal learning relationship” (2017, p. 26). In this learning community, mentor teachers must first “re-examine their own beliefs and assumptions by examining their own learning and performance as teachers and associate teachers” (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009, in Whatman & Macdonald, 2017, p. 26). This understanding of the reciprocity of mentoring aligns to the Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu commitment to fostering Tuakana-Teina relationships across our networks formally and informally.

“Tuakana” in this context refers to the senior, more experienced person, and the “teina” refers to the junior, or less-experienced person. Māori pedagogy can be utilised to exemplify the mana of the tuakana (tutor) with the teina (apprentice) in mutually beneficial ways that uplift the mana of both tuakana and teina, and of the training organisation.

Winitana, 2012, p. 32

In accordance with this reciprocal model, Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu mentors are also dedicated peer mentors who help to enable our participants to “work with reciprocal trust assertively with adults and students: showing empathy and understanding, and speaking and listening in ways that show student teachers value themselves and others” (Whatman & Macdonald, 2017, p. 26-27). The aim of this is to foster the ability of our participants to “actively participate in learning communities which are based on social justice and reciprocity” (2017, p. 27).

We are committed to the following principles of Mentorship.

Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu Mentors will:

- Have an openness to learning and engage with a wider learning community and will engage in collegial and collaborative planning over the course of the participants' two-year journey (Whatman & Macdonald, 2017; Hoben, 2011);
- Undergo induction, training and professional learning and development provided by Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu based on the principles of best practice (University of Auckland, 2012);
- Have access to the wider Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu networks of support (Whatman & Macdonald, 2017; Hoben, 2011; Butler & Douglas, 2011);
- Critically reflect on their own teaching practice and model this for our participants (Whatman & Macdonald, 2017; Hoben, 2011; Butler & Douglas, 2011; New Zealand Teachers Council, 2011); and
- Develop their ability to engage in constructive feedback and hard conversations based on specific evidence (Whatman & Macdonald, 2017).

## Ako Mātātupu practice

Schools are allocated 0.2 FTTE to support the mentoring of Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu / MTEL participants. This funding equates to one full day of mentoring per week, which generally translates to four hours per week of face-to-face mentoring time. The ideal is that schools use the funding they receive to release the mentor from 0.2 FTTE contact time, and that this time is used for the one-to-one mentoring.

Nominated Mentor teachers (In-School Mentors) are considered 'expert' teachers and are interested in working with new teachers.

Usually, a separate mentor will be assigned to each participant. In some cases, one mentor may be assigned to work with two participants. Schools use the 0.2 FTTE (per participant) Ministry of Education funding allocated to support mentoring, to ensure mentors:

- Participate in the induction and training for mentors provided by Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu;
- Conduct the equivalent of one hour of focussed observation per week;
- Lead weekly professional learning conversations, to provide each participant with individualised feedback, feed-forward and planning support (at least one hour per week)
  - These observations and discussions will complement mentor/participant discussions with the visiting, subject specific, Learning Area Advisor (LAA), and should help guide each participant towards achieving the Graduating Teacher Standards;
- Build an ongoing, positive and supportive professional relationship with each participant;
- Meet with the visiting LAA and each participant to discuss goals, targets and next steps;
- Liaise regularly with the host school coordinator;
- Understand, identify and use the range of professional expertise, skills and knowledge required in the role;
- Have a non-deficit approach with a focus on cognitive and reflective skills, and evidence to advance learning;
- Provide planned opportunities for the participants to learn, as well as taking advantage of incidental learning opportunities;

- Expect that pedagogical expertise will develop; and
- Provide support so that the participant thrives.

The mentor is expected to work as part of a wider learning community and support network to ensure the welfare of the participants. This includes alerting the school's coordinator of any major concerns in a timely manner.

Mentors are expected to attend meetings as a member of a professional learning community, and use the time allowance provided by the Ministry of Education to support the professional learning of the Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu participant.

Meetings in 2018 are scheduled as follows:

Term 1 – 1<sup>st</sup> March

Term 2 – 7<sup>th</sup> June

Term 3 – 16<sup>th</sup> August

Term 4 – 25<sup>th</sup> October

Mentors should be the main person in the school advising and guiding participants on developing good teaching. Apart from the fact that mentors are undertaking the training offered by Teach First NZ Ako Mātātupu, which is part of the agreement with the Ministry of Education, we are keen to ensure participants are not receiving multiple and conflicting messages and advice.

### Structures and Procedures for Schools

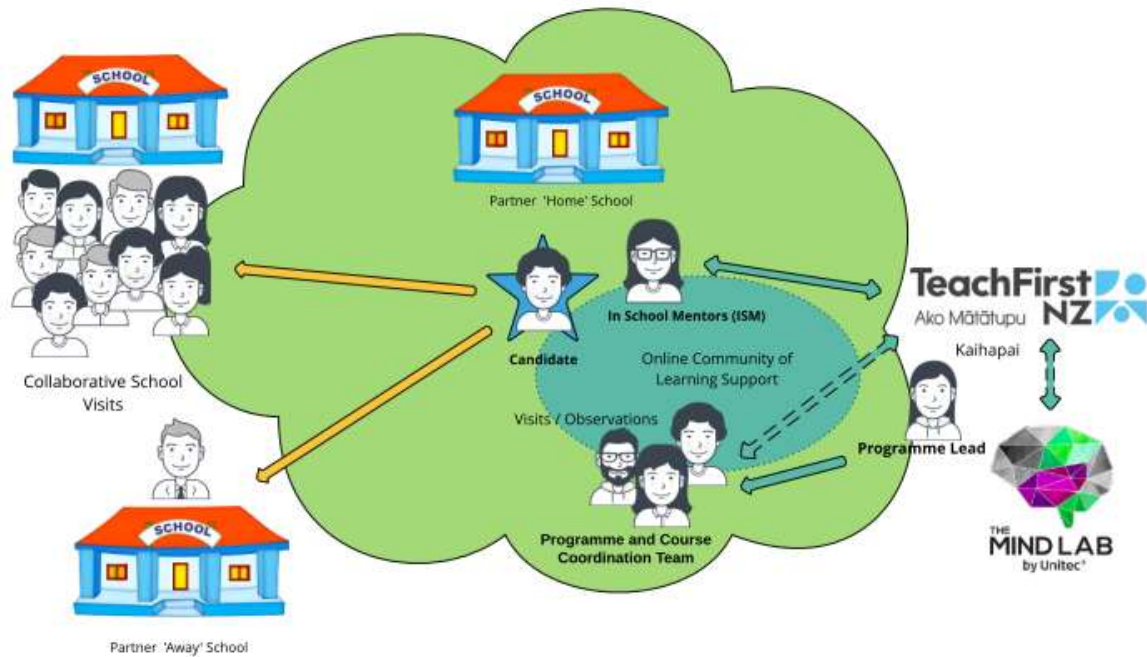
Schools should timetable mentor time. This gives a clear message to those involved, and to staff, about the importance of the work, and the level of responsibility required for the role.

There should be an agreed structure of formal, scheduled meetings between mentors and coordinators. Both should have shared understandings of each other's roles in making the programme work.

While there is some flexibility in how the mentoring is managed in schools, the requirements of Host Schools in their formal agreement with the Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu partnership should be well understood. This agreement should be used as the basis for discussing the structure of the work the coordinator and mentor do together.



## Master of Teaching and Education Leadership Student Support Model



(2017, Master of Teaching and Education Leadership programme document)

NB: Students on the programme are referred to as masters candidates, therefore, the MTEL "candidate" = Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu "participant"

## The Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu Participant Journey

The Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu journey for participants begins in November with a 9-week Summer Initial Intensive (SII) programme. This is a live-in learning experience delivered in collaboration with The Mind Lab by Unitec. The focus of the Intensive is on developing the skills and knowledge to prepare participants for working in the classroom from the beginning of the upcoming school year.

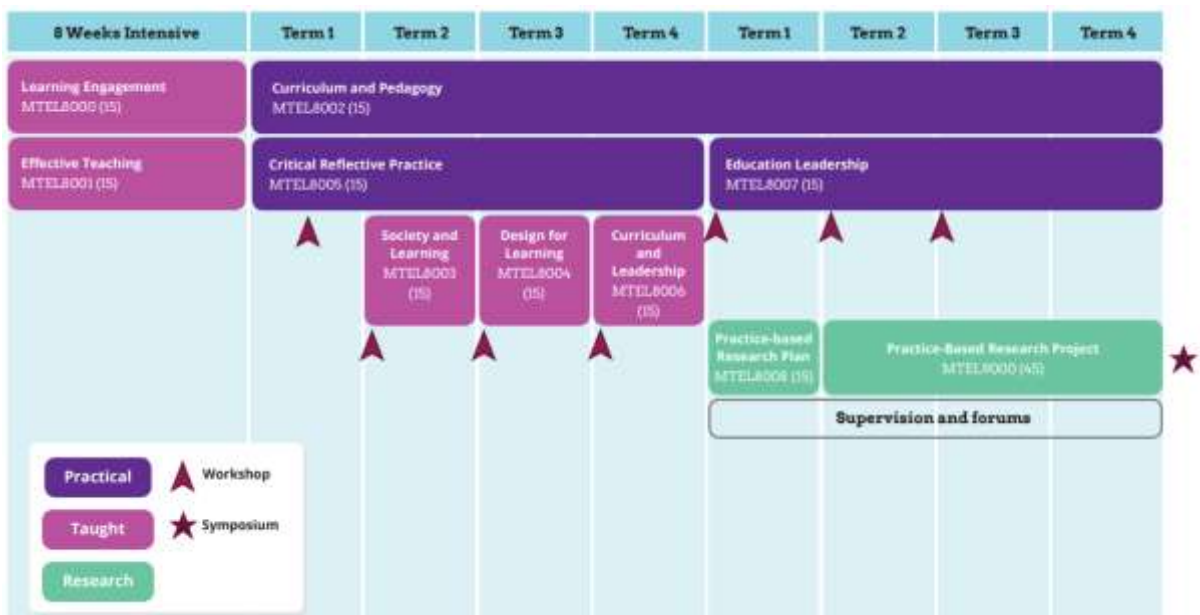
After the Intensive, participants begin teaching at a secondary school in either Auckland, Northland, Whangarei, Waikato or the Bay of Plenty on a full salary.

Participants are supported from day one in their schools. They teach 60 per cent of a full-time teaching load to allow them to complete their ongoing

postgraduate study. Additionally, participants have regular contact with the student-centred support team, including an In-School Mentor and coordinator, Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu Kaihapai and visiting Learning Area Advisors (LAAs).

Over the course of the two years, participants work towards completing the Master of Teaching and Education Leadership. For this, they receive a full scholarship that covers all costs associated with their studies.

The participants' MTEL journey in terms of academic courses is illustrated as follows:



## Mentor Programme

### Overview

Event	Forum	Content
<b>PARTICIPANT/MENTEE YEAR ONE</b>		
Dependent on appointment as Mentor	Induction Meeting	The induction meeting will occur when the mentor is appointed in the school. One of the Teach First NZ: Ako Mātātupu team will meet with mentors and guide them through the mentorship process including guidelines and expectations
Ongoing	Mentor-Participant meetings	Meetings with mentor and ongoing pedagogy support
Term 1 – 1 <sup>st</sup> March Term 2 – 7 <sup>th</sup> June Term 3 – 16 <sup>th</sup> August Term 4 – 25 <sup>th</sup> October	Kanohi ki te Kanohi Mentor Meetings 1 – 4	Ongoing online and in person support for mentors and mentees
<b>November</b>	Evaluation	Mentors complete annual reports for their mentees
<b>November</b>	Ako Mātātupu	Mentors invited to annual graduation and induction event
<b>PARTICIPANT/MENTEE YEAR TWO</b>		
Ongoing	Kanohi ki te kanohi mentor meetings	Meetings with mentor. Ongoing pedagogy support
<b>2019 term 1-4 (dates TBC)</b>	Meetings 1-4	Ongoing online and in person support for mentors and mentees
<b>November 2019</b>	Evaluation	Mentors complete annual reports for their mentees
<b>November 2019</b>	Ako Matatupu	Mentors invited to annual unconference, graduation and induction event

Throughout the participant-mentor journey there will be other events to which mentors will be warmly invited.

## Contacts

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