

Federation advocates sectoral qualifications in schools

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The Industry Training Federation (ITF) is promoting broad sectoral-based qualifications in schools, that will provide clearer pathways to vocational study and work. ITF Executive Director Jeremy Baker used his keynote address at this week's ITF Annual Conference to promote real and practical vocational pathways in schools and beyond. Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) are proposing to work together, with schools and tertiary providers to develop broad sectoral qualifications that would provide clear and visible pathways into different industries.

"We have initially identified five broad qualifications that senior secondary school students could work towards. These broad qualifications would help students to identify career choices, but would not limit their options. These qualifications would complement the NCEA, and help remove confusion about vocational education and training options. They would also help students see the relevance of core subjects like English, maths, and science to the working world, which would motivate achievement in these subjects."

The Federation is suggesting that qualifications be developed covering the services; building and construction; manufacturing and technology; primary; and social and community sectors.

"This proposal is a smart use of the opportunities created by the NCEA. It does not change anything for those students heading to university but provides real and valuable options for the 70% of secondary students who choose not to go to university. These students will be the vast majority of our future skilled workers. This proposal would help them find pathways to vocations that suit their interests and strengths."

Mr Baker said the Federation was continuing to work with ITOs, government, and sector groups to develop the proposal.

"So far though, we believe there is significant interest and goodwill for this proposal and the time is right for it to be discussed publicly," Mr Baker said.

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The Industry Training Federation is a voluntary membership organisation representing all of New Zealand's 39 Industry Training Organisations.