MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

Information for educators

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Ongoing Resourcing Scheme – Specialist Teachers

Each student with special education needs in the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) is allocated additional teacher time. An additional teacher, commonly known as a specialist teacher, works as part of the school team to support the classroom teacher's programme to make sure the student's learning needs can be met in the best way possible.

ORS resourcing – what is additional teacher time?

The Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) provides resources for a very small group of students in New Zealand who have the highest special education needs. These students have an ongoing need for support throughout their school years.

Students on the ORS are verified as having either high or very high needs. The level of resourcing a student receives depends on their verification status.

The ORS resourcing is additional to teacher funding and operational grants paid to schools for all enrolled students.

If a student enrolled at your school has been accepted into ORS your school will be allocated funding for additional teacher time to support the ORS student as follows.

- If the student is verified as high needs, your school will receive funding for 0.1 full-time equivalent additional teacher time.
- If the student is verified as very high needs, your school will receive funding for 0.2 full-time equivalent additional teacher time.
- If a student enrolled at your school is on the ORS and verified as having a sensory (vision or hearing) impairment, the approach for allocating funding for additional teacher time is different.
  See page 2 for more information.

Staff employed with additional teacher funding to support ORS students are commonly known as specialist teachers. This is because they generally have specialist expertise and skills to work with students with special education needs. Depending on their employment situation, staff employed through additional teacher funding may also be called additional teachers or resource teachers.

Note: If a student on ORS changes schools, the additional teacher time moves with them to their new school.

What are the options when a school is allocated additional teacher time?

If a student enrolled at your school is receiving additional teacher time, there are two ways it can be used depending on the student's special education needs.

1. Employ a specialist teacher on school staff

The Ministry allocates funding for additional teachers to schools. Schools can employ specialist teachers as a member of school staff. As with all teachers, additional teachers are responsible to the principal and board of trustees.

2. Receive specialist teacher support through the Outreach Service

Schools enrolling students on the ORS, who do not have a sensory impairment, can agree to transfer the additional teacher staffing component to an Outreach Service provider to receive support from an Outreach specialist teacher. For further information about the Outreach Service refer to the *Specialist Teacher Outreach Service – Information for Educators* sheet.

Note: When the specialist teacher is employed by another school, as in the case of the sensory schools (see below) or Outreach Service, your school will need to complete a memorandum of understanding to identify and agree with the other school how the specialist teacher will work with the student and the student's support team.

Students on the ORS who have a sensory impairment

There is a different approach for allocating funding for additional teacher time for students on the ORS who also have a sensory impairment (students who have been accepted into ORS and are vision or hearing impaired).

Specific knowledge is required to support students on the ORS who have a sensory impairment. The Ministry allocates funding for specialist teachers directly to the Deaf Education Centres (Kelston Deaf Education Centre or Van Asch Deaf Education Centre) or BLENNZ (Blind and Low Vision Education Network, New Zealand). These teachers are called Resource Teachers: Deaf or Resource Teachers: Vision.

Students on the ORS who have a sensory impairment and other special education needs

When a student on the ORS with a sensory impairment also has other special education needs and is verified on other ORS criteria, the Deaf Education Centre or BLENNZ and the student's school can discuss how to best meet the student's needs.

For example:

- If a student is verified for both a visual impairment and other special education needs and the enrolling school has been allocated funding for an additional teacher, the school can agree to transfer the staffing to BLENNZ if the student needs support from a Resource Teacher: Vision.
- If a student is verified for both a hearing impairment and other special education needs and the funding for an additional teacher has been allocated to the Deaf Education Centre, the Deaf Education Centre may agree to transfer the funding to the enrolling school after discussing the student's broader needs.
- If a student is verified for special education needs other than hearing, but the enrolling school is also concerned about the support the student requires for a hearing impairment, they can discuss this with the Deaf Education Centre and transfer the ORS funding to it if appropriate.

Information for schools employing specialist teachers

Your school can employ specialist teachers to suit particular needs. This may be done in a number of different and flexible ways.

- A school with several enrolled students on the ORS may choose to employ one specialist teacher to work with one or more students with similar needs, or the school may employ several different specialist teachers to work with individual students who have different special education needs.
- Some schools may choose to combine the additional teacher resources and share the specialist teacher between schools.

- Some schools may choose to combine the additional teacher funding to create a 'homeroom' or 'learning centre', with dedicated staffing. This should not compromise or exclude individual students receiving ORS support participating in other classes with specialist teacher support as appropriate.

It's up to your school to determine how additional teacher time will be used. Your school will be expected to clearly show how the use of the additional teacher resource is meeting the needs of the students on the ORS.

Note: Additional teacher time is not intended for the overall administration of special education services in schools, for counselling or guidance, or for reducing overall class size.

What skills should schools look for when employing a specialist teacher?

Specialist teachers should have the skills and expertise to work with students with special education needs, or be prepared to undertake professional development in relevant special education topics such as adapting teaching and learning strategies within *The New Zealand Curriculum* and *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*.

Schools should aim to employ teachers in specialist teacher positions who have qualifications and experience relevant to the needs of the students they will be supporting.

Where there are no teachers with relevant expertise in the local area, schools should select the most appropriate teacher and arrange for professional support.

Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching: Complex Educational Needs

Massey University and the University of Canterbury both offer a Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching: Complex Educational Needs. The Ministry offers a Complex Needs Study Award to support teachers or advisors who work with students with complex education needs and would like to gain this postgraduate qualification.

For more information about the Complex Needs Study Award go to: www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/SpecialEducation/CareersAndProfessionalDevelopment/SpecialEducationScholarshipsAndStudyAwards/2013/Categories/ComplexNeeds.aspx

The role of the specialist teacher

The classroom teacher is responsible for ensuring every student in their class learns and achieves. For some parts of the school day a classroom teacher may include a student on the ORS with little or no change to the classroom programme. However, at other times significant adaptations may need to be made to the classroom programme to meet the needs of the student. The specialist teacher works with the classroom teacher to adapt the class environment, programmes and materials.

Your school's Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCo), or staff member with responsibility for special education, will also support and work with the classroom teacher and specialist teacher.

The timing, type and level of support a specialist teacher provides should be agreed between the classroom teacher and the student's support team, so teaching and learning is planned and delivered in a coordinated way. The student's support team may include: the classroom or subject teacher/s, teacher's aide, other school staff such as the specialist teacher or senior members of the school team such as the SENCo or dean, other specialist services and the student's family or whānau.

Like classroom teachers, specialist teachers should also perform a combination of activities – some of their time will be spent in the classroom and some of their time will be spent planning, developing resources and meeting with others to support the student and their team.

Specialist teachers provide a range of specialist teaching and support activities to:

- assess a student's learning needs
- plan and prepare appropriate learning programmes for the student
- monitor student progress and achievement and planning next learning steps
- model effective teaching strategies and practices for teachers and teachers' aides

- assist with differentiating class and school curriculum content within the *The New Zealand Curriculum and Te Maruatanga o Aotearoa*
- adapt and prepare learning materials and resources appropriate for a student's needs
- teach students within the class or small group settings
- integrate specialist services/ therapy interventions into everyday class and school programmes
- contribute to the Individual Education Plan (IEP) planning and implementation process.

Specialist teachers and Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

The IEP is a written plan that sets out a student's goals and identifies teaching strategies, resources and support needed from the people around the student to help them achieve those goals.

It's the school's responsibility to initiate the IEP process and plan for the student. An IEP is developed as part of a collaborative process between those who work with and know the student well. The IEP team process belongs to the support team members and includes parents/ whānau and the student as active, valued key members. All team members are responsible for the collaborative process that informs and shapes the IEP.

At IEP meetings the team agrees on a plan to inform teaching and learning; it may also include wider school and community goals. Teachers are the leaders of learning in their classrooms. Their role in the IEP process is crucial to the student's learning programme and progress.

The IEP team decides the roles and responsibilities for each team member, depending on the student's learning context and the experience and needs of team members.

The specialist teacher is an essential member of the student's IEP team and contributes their expertise as part of the IEP process. For further information about the IEP process see the following publications.

- *Individual Education Plans working as a team – Information for parents/caregivers and educators.*
- *Collaboration for Success: Individual Education Plans* booklet.



For more information:

If you're unclear about any part of our service or have any questions about the help your student receives, please talk with special education staff at your local Ministry of Education office or call the special education information line on **0800 622 222**.

You can get more detailed special education information under the educator section of our website: **www.minedu.govt.nz** or on Te Kete Ipurangi, a website that provides educational material for teachers and schools: **www.tki.org.nz**.

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