



## Profiling 'Priority' Learners

### EAWG Data Report 1:

Who are they, where are they, and what are they doing?

## Key Points

The 'priority learners' group – primarily those learners at NZQF levels 1-3 – is the largest single group of learners in New Zealand's tertiary education system. Although the number of enrolments in this group has declined since its 2005 high point, in 2009 these learners still made up 36% of all tertiary enrolments. However, many of these priority learners are enrolled in part-time programmes – from 2002-2009 an annual average of 61% of these learners were enrolled on a part-time basis, and the average learner was enrolled as 0.35 EFTS (the lowest of any level).

Māori have comparatively high rates of participation at levels 1-3, and this is a key reason for the overall high rates of participation by Māori in tertiary education throughout the 2000s. In 2009, the 'age-standardised' participation rate for Māori at levels 1-3 was 8.7%, compared to 4.9% for Pacific peoples, 3.7% for New Zealand European, 3.3% for domestic Asian learners, and 4.4% overall.

One of the most distinctive features of students at levels 1-3 is their age profile – specifically the comparatively high proportion of learners who are aged 40+. In 2009, 38% of level 1-3 learners fell into this age group, compared to approximately 30% for learners at other sub-degree and postgraduate levels, and 12% for those at degree-level.

Level 1-3 learners are primarily (63% in 2009) located within the ITP sector, with smaller concentrations located in PTEs and Wānanga (21% and 18% respectively) and only a very small presence (2%) in universities.

Level 1-3 enrolments are currently concentrated in the 'Studies in Human Society', 'Language and Literature', and 'Office Studies' fields of study. Historically, there were large concentrations in 'Employment Skills' and 'Social Skills' programmes, but these have shrunk since 2004 (being balanced by corresponding growth in the previous three fields). Approximately one-quarter of EFTS are located in 'generic' programmes, while just under one-half are located in 'specific vocational' fields – the remainder being in programmes that provide vocational skills not tied to a specific occupation.

Targeted training programmes also share many aims with level 1-3 programmes. These programmes consist of the *Training Opportunities* and *Youth Training* schemes – of which, the *Training Opportunities* scheme has recently been divided into two slightly different programmes, one administered by the Ministry of Social Development and one by the Tertiary Education Commission. Placements in both programmes fell dramatically over the 2000s, driven primarily by falls in the number of NZ European and Māori participants. Participants in both schemes are noticeably younger than those at levels 1-3, and overwhelmingly based in PTEs.

In addition to level 1-3 learners and those in targeted training programmes, this report also includes some brief information on those participating in level 4 bridging programmes designed to prepare students for further study. Although data on these programmes are weak, overall participation in these programmes has risen steadily over the 2000s, with participation by European learners outstripping other ethnic groups – particularly Māori. Wānanga and PTEs have essentially exited from offering this category of programmes, and while numbers at both ITPs and universities have risen relatively steadily, changing policy settings appear to make it likely that numbers at universities will decline further in the future.

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## Introduction

This report has been produced as part of an Ako Aotearoa-managed, TEC and Ministry of Education-supported project designed to increase education attainment for priority learners – those engaged in learning fundamental skills. These are students engaged in programmes designed to provide the basic, essential skills required for initial entry into the workforce, the development of further lifeskills, and/or progression into further study, and primarily consist of learners at levels 1-3 of the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF).

We are using the term priority learners for this group because of their importance in achieving the goals of the *Tertiary Education Strategy 2010-15*. As well as generally supporting high-quality research and improving system performance, the *Strategy* prioritises addressing the needs of several priority learner groups (Minster for Tertiary Education, 2010):

- More young people (aged under 25) achieving qualifications at levels four and above, particularly degrees.
- More Māori students enjoying success at higher levels.
- More Pasifika students enjoying success at higher levels.
- More young people moving successfully from school into tertiary education.
- Improve[d] literacy, language, and numeracy and skills outcomes from levels one to three study.

The *Strategy* therefore directly emphasises the need to improve outcomes from level 1-3 study. In addition, however, ensuring the existence of high-quality foundational education is key to addressing the needs of most other priority groups. To ensure that more Māori and Pacific peoples achieve at higher levels we need to ensure that the foundational programmes in which many learners participate, and associated institutional arrangements, support effective pathways to higher levels of study. We need to do the same for young people who are deciding whether or not to transition from school to tertiary study, and ensure that level 1-3 study is a genuinely valuable option for those not yet ready to study at higher levels.

This report provides an overview of official statistics on the profile of learners who are studying at lower levels of the National Qualifications Framework. In addition to this 'core' group, the report also briefly discusses learners taking part in programmes with a similar focus on fundamental skills: targeted training programmes such as *Training Opportunities* or *Youth Training*, and learners at NZQF level 4 who are engaged in 'Learning Skills Programmes' – i.e. programmes designed specifically to prepare students for progression to higher level qualifications.

Along with a companion report profiling achievement and outcomes data for this group, this document provides background and context for the deliberations of the Educational Attainment Working Group (EAWG); these documents are attempts to identify where our system seems to be working well and where there seem to be issues.

It should be noted that this report focuses on learners studying at providers: Universities, Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs), Wānanga, and Private Training Establishments (PTEs). The Industry Training sector is also a prominent provider of level 1-3 training, but is fundamentally different in approach and nature from provider-based education. Discussion of relevant data for

industry trainees can be found in Mahoney (2009b, 2010a) and Crichton (2010), and in work by the Industry Training Federation ([www.itf.org.nz](http://www.itf.org.nz)).

## Notes on Data

The material in this report has been drawn on data from the Ministry of Education's official data collections. Much of this is publicly available on the Ministry's *Education Counts* website ([www.educationcounts.govt.nz](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz)), with additional material being provided directly by the Ministry. Unless otherwise stated, all data relates only to domestic participants and percentages and totals are based on actual learner numbers rather than Equivalent Full-Time Students (EFTS).

One of the limitations when dealing with datasets that span different periods is the impact of different methods of collecting and analysing data, and changes to policy settings that affect both data and these methods. For example, it would obviously be difficult to robustly compare data for priority learners with learners prior to the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework. To avoid such problems, this report concerns itself primarily with data since 2000, although individual datasets may begin at different points depending on what data is readily available. Although some relevant information is available for 2010, this report consistently stops at 2009 as this is the final year for which data has been officially published.

Analysis by sub-sector in this report uses four categories: universities, Institutes of Technology and polytechnics (ITPs), wānanga, and Private Training Establishments (PTEs). Until 2007, an additional class of institution existed – Colleges of Education. From 2004 to 2007 all these institutions progressively merged with universities, and so pre-2007 data in this report has included their data within the university category.

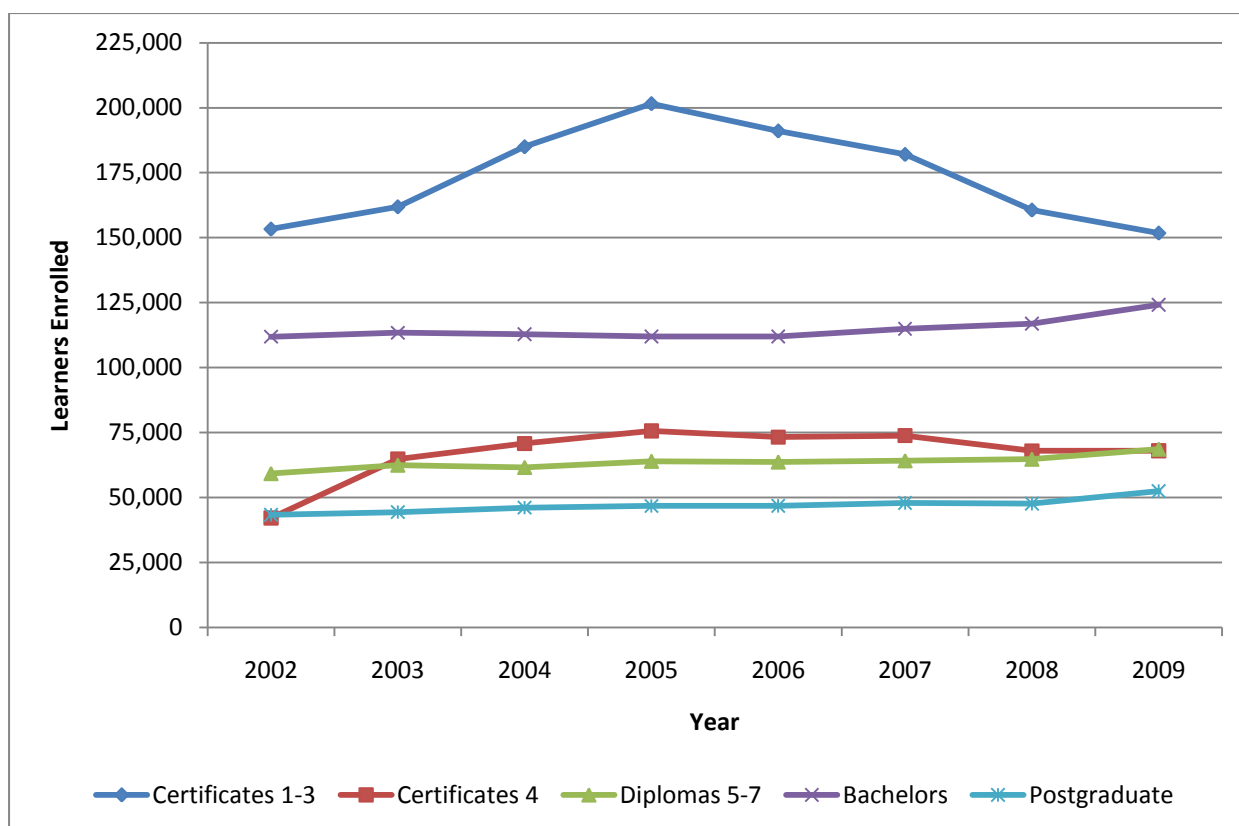
Unless otherwise indicated, this report is based on data returns for all learners enrolled at a provider who are aged over 15 and enrolled in a formal qualification as at least 0.03 EFTS (in practice, for at least one week). Key sub-populations of tertiary learners that this excludes include, unless otherwise noted (Ministry n.d.):

- Students in private providers who are not eligible for EFTS-based tuition subsidies or student loans and allowances.
- Students whose total equivalent full-time formal study in a year is less than or equal to a week.
- Students at providers that do not receive any SAC funding (with the exception of targeted training data).
- STAR and Gateway students.
- All non-formal study, including non-formal adult and community education and non-NZQA registered private providers.

## Placing Learners at Levels 1-3 in Context

The priority learners group is currently the single largest group of learners in New Zealand’s tertiary education system. While direct historical comparisons are problematic due to changing policy settings and definitions, growth at this level has been clearly one of the main contributors to New Zealand’s significant increase in tertiary participation since the reforms of the 1990s. For example, in 1995 learners in these programmes made up 21% of all enrolments, compared to 36% in 2002, 44% in 2005 (the high point for the group), and 36% in 2009. Figure 1 below shows enrolment numbers from 2002-2009 for different levels of the tertiary system. This illustrates the point that while enrolments at this level have undergone a large decline since 2005, with 2009 enrolments being 25% lower than this high, these learners remain a significant part of the tertiary landscape.

Figure 1: Number of domestic tertiary learners by qualification level, 2002-2009



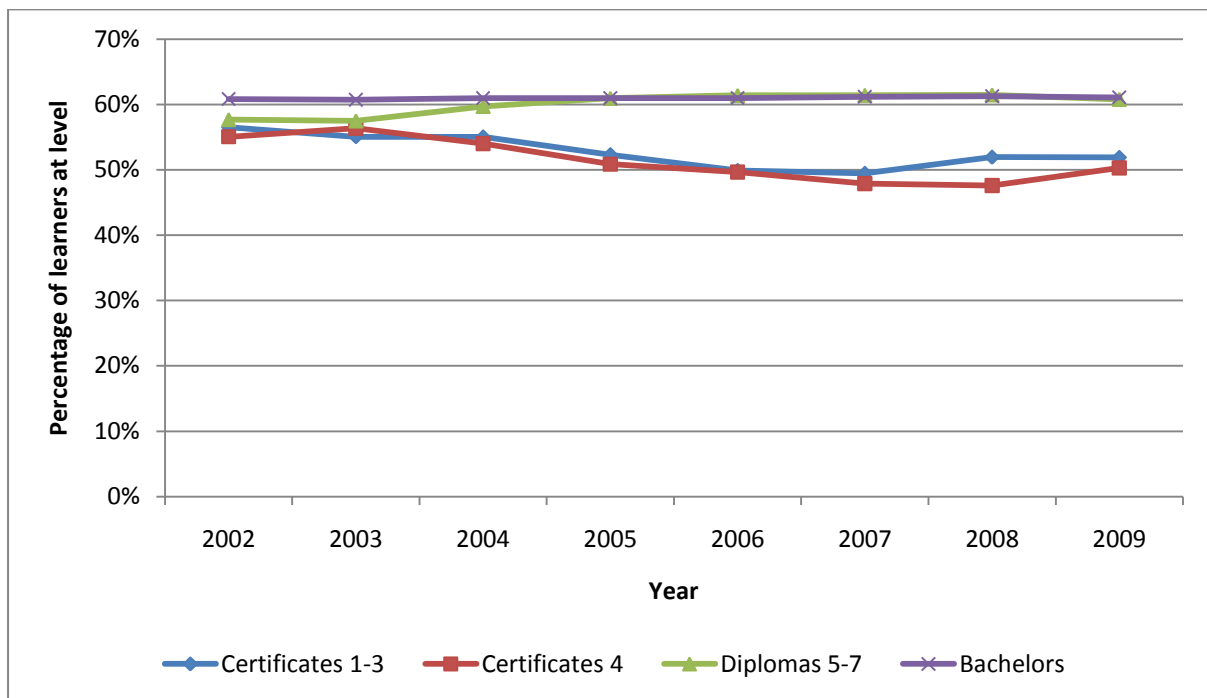
As discussed later in this report, however, it should be noted that level 1-3 learners have a particularly high proportion of learners studying on a part-time basis. For example, in 2005 – the high point of level 1-3 participation – 64% of participants were enrolled on a part-time basis.

## Learners by Gender

Levels 1-3, along with level 4, have a larger male presence than higher levels of the education system. As shown in figure 2 below, the percentage of learners at level 1-3 that are female dropped noticeably over the early 2000 to settle at around 50% (as did the percentage of women at level 4), while this figure grew slightly for level 5-7 Diplomas, and remained essentially unchanged over the 2000s for degree-level study. In 2009, 39% of all male learners in the tertiary system were studying

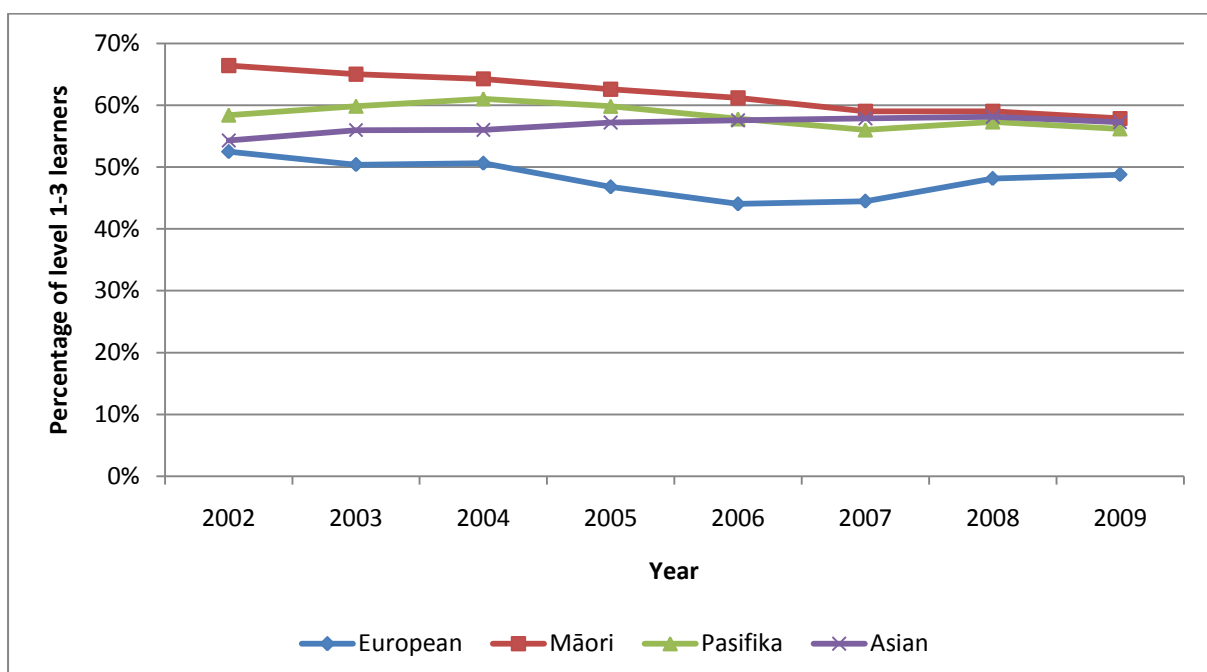
at level 1-3, while 33% of female learners were studying at this level. In contrast, in that year 26% of male learners were studying at bachelors level, compared to 32% of female learners.

Figure 2: Percentage of domestic learners who are female by qualification level, 2002-2009



A large part of this prominence of male learners is driven the gender profile of European learners at this level. Figure 3 below illustrates the percentage of level 1-3 learners who are female across ethnic groups, showing that while this percentage converged over the 2000s for Māori, Pacific, and Asian learners (so that in 2009 these figures were 58%, 56%, and 57% respectively), European learners at level 1-3 have been dominated by men since the middle of the decade.

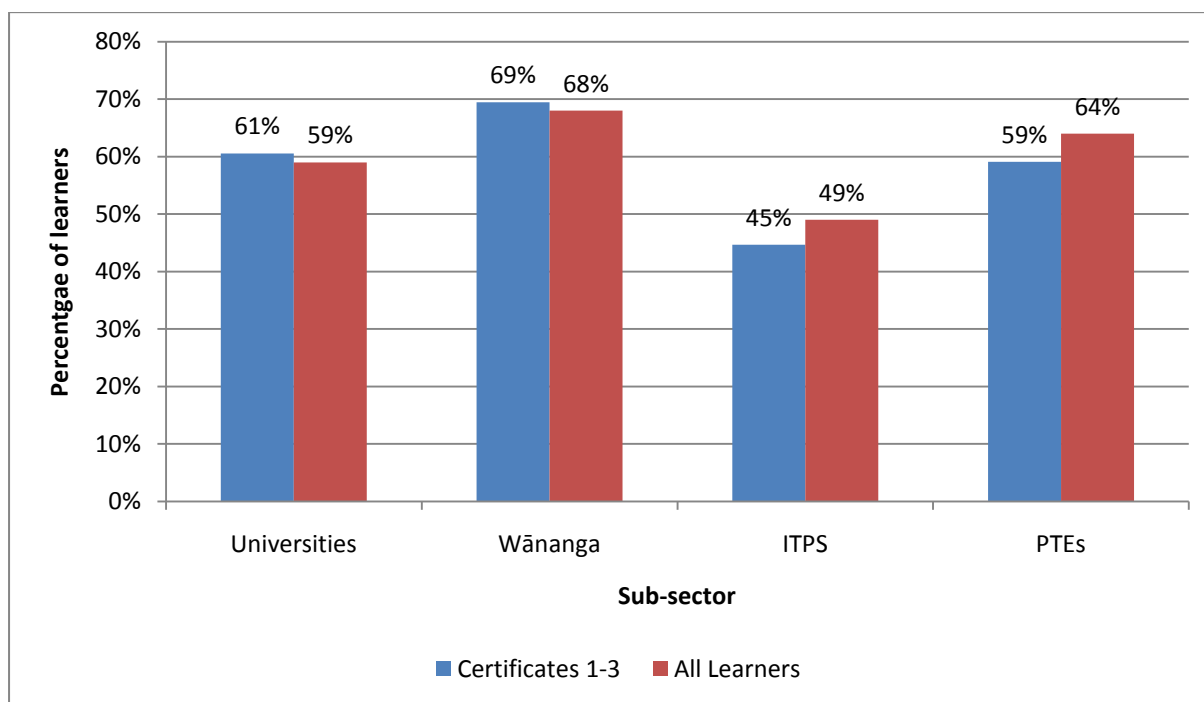
Figure 3: Percentage of domestic learners at levels 1-3 who are female by ethnicity, 2002-2009





The prominence of male learners also differs clearly by sub-sector. As shown in figure 4 below, in 2009 women were a particularly large proportion of level 1-3 learners at wānanga, and a particularly low proportion of those at ITPs. While these differences do broadly align with the overall gender balance of those sub-sectors, it is worth noting that ITPs and PTEs both have a more marked difference between the proportion of women amongst learners at level 1-3 and amongst their overall learner population than do universities and wānanga.

Figure 4: Percentage of domestic learners at levels 1-3 and All Levels who are female by sub-sector, 2009



## Learners by Ethnicity

The expansion in the priority learners group has been one of the major drivers behind the dramatic increase of participation by Māori in tertiary education. As shown in figure 10 in Appendix One, throughout the 2000s Māori have had the highest rates of participation in tertiary education of any ethnic group by a considerable margin, driven by very high comparative participation rates at levels 1-3. Pacific learners are also concentrated at Levels 1-3, with 51% of Pacific learners in tertiary education being enrolled at this level in 2002, 50% in 2005, and 41% in 2009. Table 1 below contains the ethnic identification of domestic learners at levels 1-3 from 2002 to 2009, while Table 2 contains age-standardised participation rates at all levels for ethnic groups in 2009.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Age-standardised participation rates involve weighting data to give all populations the same age distribution. This allows for easier comparisons between populations. For more detail see [http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/technical\\_info/indicator\\_definition/student\\_participation/schooling/395](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/technical_info/indicator_definition/student_participation/schooling/395)

**Table 1: Number of domestic learners at levels 1-3 by ethnicity; 2002-2009<sup>2</sup>**

| Ethnicity                | 2002    | 2003    | 2004    | 2005    | 2006    | 2007    | 2008    | 2009    |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| European                 | 89,906  | 89,013  | 98,038  | 114,867 | 114,802 | 110,825 | 96,524  | 90,318  |
| Māori                    | 49,971  | 50,436  | 53,172  | 52,802  | 47,664  | 46,090  | 43,410  | 42,369  |
| Pasifika                 | 11,419  | 11,408  | 14,073  | 14,054  | 12,179  | 13,091  | 13,015  | 13,031  |
| Asian                    | 9,111   | 18,528  | 26,794  | 26,127  | 21,320  | 18,391  | 14,570  | 14,155  |
| Other                    | 4,984   | 6,043   | 6,796   | 7,576   | 7,318   | 6,828   | 5,183   | 4,686   |
| Total level 1-3 Learners | 153,338 | 161,882 | 184,995 | 201,592 | 191,077 | 182,046 | 160,645 | 151,783 |

**Table 2: Age-standardised participation rates of domestic learners by ethnicity and qualification level; 2009**

| Ethnicity | Certificates 1-3 | Certificates 4 | Diplomas 5-7 | Bachelors | Postgraduate | Total Learners <sup>2</sup> |
|-----------|------------------|----------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| European  | 3.7%             | 1.6%           | 1.9%         | 3.5%      | 1.5%         | 276,244                     |
| Māori     | 8.7%             | 3.9%           | 2.7%         | 3.1%      | 0.9%         | 83,785                      |
| Pasifika  | 4.9%             | 2.6%           | 2.0%         | 3.0%      | 0.7%         | 31,951                      |
| Asian     | 3.3%             | 1.3%           | 1.7%         | 5.0%      | 2.5%         | 53,881                      |
| All       | 4.4%             | 2.0%           | 2.0%         | 3.6%      | 1.5%         | 425,650                     |

Enrolments by domestic Asian learners at Levels 1-3 spiked from 2003 to 2005, so that whereas in 2009 27% of Asian learners were enrolled at this level, in 2005 close to half of all learners were at this level. However, while participation at levels 1-3 has declined for all ethnic groups in recent years, since 2005 the participation rate for Asian learners at Levels 1-3 has declined far more significantly than for other ethnic groups. The 2009 level 1-3 participation rate for Asian learners was 44% of that in 2005, compared to an overall figure of 71%.

Historically, the priority learners group has been composed of a greater number of Level 1 & 2 learners compared to level 3, but overall this situation has been steadily decreasing since 2003, a trend that is particularly strong amongst learners of Pacific and Asian ethnicities. As shown in table 6 and figure 13 in Appendix One, historically Asian priority learners were the group most strongly concentrated at levels 1 & 2 compared to level 3, peaking in 2004 when 82% of level 1-3 enrolments by Asian learners were at levels 1 & 2. By contrast, in 2009, 47% of Asian learners and 39% of Pacific learners were at these levels, with Māori, European, and 'Other' ethnicity learners all having more than 50% of priority learners studying at levels 1-2.

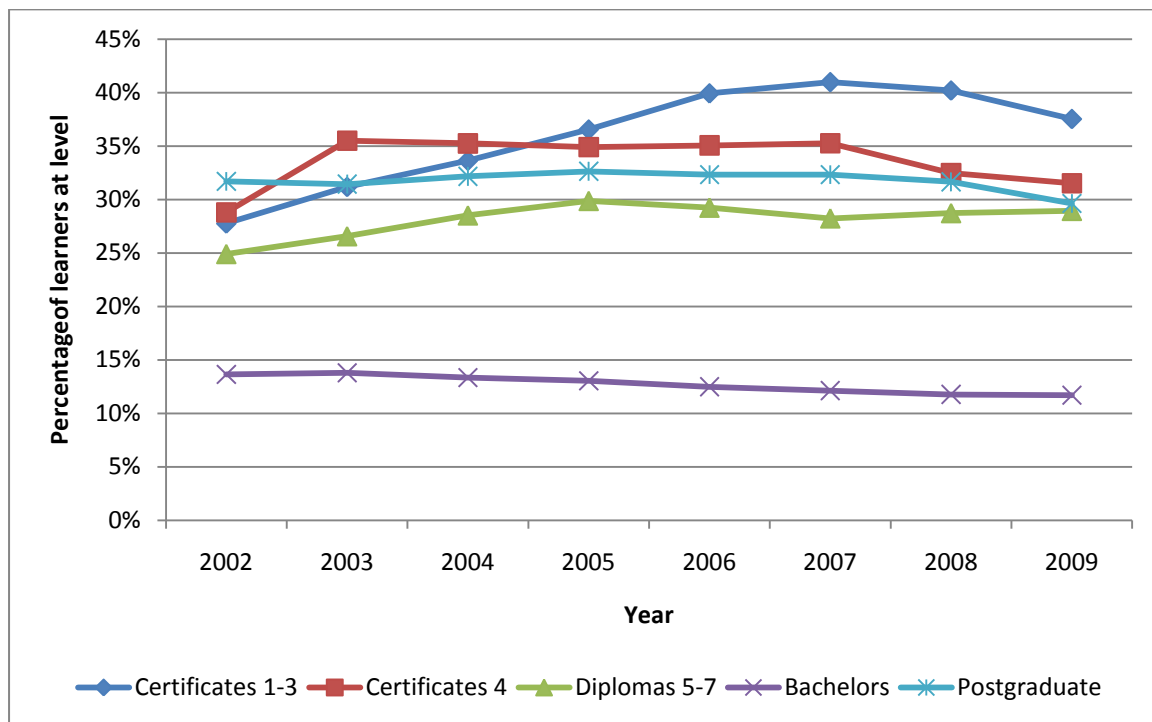
## Learners by Age

One of the most distinctive characteristics of learners at levels 1-3 has been the dramatic growth in and current presence of large proportions of older learners – particularly by learners aged 40 and over. As shown in figure 5 below, in the early 2000s learners aged 40 and over were – while prominent – not present in unusually high proportions compared to other forms of non-degree-level education. Over the first part of the decade, however, levels 1-3 experienced was dramatic growth

<sup>2</sup> Note that learner ethnicity has not been prioritised. Numbers for individual ethnic groups therefore do not sum to the total number of learners.

in this age-group, with the number of participants increasing by 79% from 2002 to 2006 (compared to overall growth in level 1-3 participants of 31%).<sup>3</sup>

Figure 5: Percentage of domestic learners aged 40+ by qualification level, 2002-2009



Since 2005 the largest single age group at this level has been learners aged 40+. Although the numbers of learners in these groups has been decreasing in recent years, in 2009 learners aged 40+ still accounted for 38% of learners – a far higher proportion than other levels. In contrast, as shown in figures 11 and 12 in Appendix One, the percentage of level 1-3 learners aged under 25 fell from 35% in 2002 to 28% in 2006 and 2007 (although a combination of falling enrolments amongst other age groups and a slight increase in enrolments did see this age group’s share increase to 31% in 2008 and 33% in 2009).

There are, however, very notable differences in the age distribution of these learners based around both gender and ethnicity. Across all ethnic groups there are a greater proportion of women than men in the 25-39 and 40+ age groups, and correspondingly more men aged under 25. In 2009, 36% of male learners were aged under 25, 28% were aged 25-39, and 36% were aged 40+. This compares to 31%, 30%, and 39% respectively of female learners.

As shown in Table 3 below, differences in age distribution by ethnicity are even more dramatic, with Pacific learners having a much younger age distribution than other ethnic groups, and learners of Asian ethnicity being significantly older.

<sup>3</sup> From 2002 to 2006, the actual number of learners at levels 1-3 who were aged 40 or over grew from 42,568 to 76,288. This compares to 15% growth across all other age groups at levels 1-3.

**Table 3: Age profile of domestic learners at levels 1-3 by ethnicity, 2009**

| <b>Ethnicity</b> | <b>Under 25</b> | <b>25-39</b> | <b>40+</b> |
|------------------|-----------------|--------------|------------|
| European         | 35%             | 27%          | 38%        |
| Māori            | 36%             | 33%          | 31%        |
| Pasifika         | 46%             | 32%          | 23%        |
| Asian            | 17%             | 29%          | 54%        |
| All learners     | 33%             | 29%          | 38%        |

## Learners by Sub-sector

In recent years, the distribution of priority learners between sectors has become relatively stable, with universities having a little under 2%, Wānanga around 18%, PTEs around 21%, and ITPs close to two-thirds. As shown in Table 4 below, ITPs and Wānanga, and to a slightly lesser extent PTEs, have a noticeably higher share of enrolments at these levels than their share of overall enrolments, while universities have a dramatically lower comparable share. For all sub-sectors other than ITPs, however, their share of level 1-3 enrolments declined over the period 2002 to 2009.

**Table 4: Percentage and Number of domestic learners at levels 1-3 and All Levels by sub-sector, 2002, 2005, 2009<sup>4</sup>**

| <b>Year</b> |                        | <b>University<sup>5</sup></b> |                   | <b>ITPs</b>          |                   | <b>Wānanga</b>       |                   | <b>PTEs</b>          |                   |
|-------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
|             |                        | <b>L1-3 learners</b>          | <b>All levels</b> | <b>L1-3 learners</b> | <b>All levels</b> | <b>L1-3 learners</b> | <b>All levels</b> | <b>L1-3 learners</b> | <b>All levels</b> |
| 2002        | Percentage of learners | 5%                            | 39%               | 44%                  | 35%               | 21%                  | 11%               | 34%                  | 20%               |
|             | Number of learners     | 8016                          | 149,497           | 67,869               | 132,015           | 32,293               | 43,356            | 52,205               | 74,582            |
| 2005        | Percentage of learners | 3%                            | 32%               | 56%                  | 44%               | 22%                  | 14%               | 23%                  | 16%               |
|             | Number of learners     | 6424                          | 146,540           | 113,779              | 200,364           | 45,164               | 62,154            | 46,778               | 74,514            |
| 2009        | Percentage of learners | 2%                            | 36%               | 63%                  | 42%               | 18%                  | 10%               | 21%                  | 16%               |
|             | Number of learners     | 2347                          | 154,866           | 95,598               | 180,709           | 27,378               | 42,566            | 31,442               | 66,897            |

Almost all (89% in 2009) level 1-3 learners at universities are located at either the University of Waikato or Auckland University of Technology. At ITPs, the largest concentrations are at the Open Polytechnic (12% of level 1-3 learners at ITPs in 2009) and Waikato Institute of Technology (10%), with other ITPs having from 2% to 7% of these learners. Amongst those learners studying at Wānanga, almost all (94%) are located at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa.

## Courseloads and Study Type

Learners at Level 1-3 also generally have significantly lower courseloads, as represented by significantly lower average EFTS-per-enrolment than other levels.<sup>6</sup> Learners at levels 1-3 were

<sup>4</sup> Learners may study at multiple providers. Combined with rounding, percentages may thus not sum to 100%.

<sup>5</sup> Including Colleges of Education when applicable.

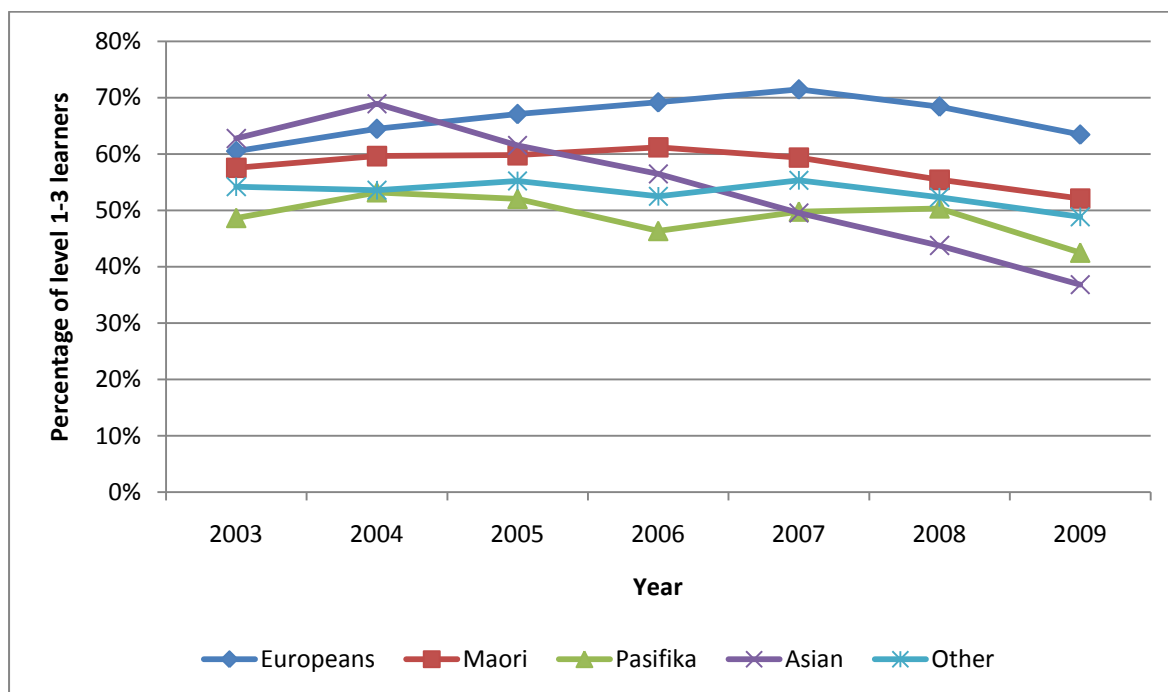
enrolled in an annual average of 0.35 EFTS from 2002-2009, or around one-third the amount of annual credits required for an average full-time programme across all tertiary education. This compares to 0.44 for level 4, 0.50 for levels 5-7, and 0.79 for Bachelors-level learners.

This is a product of both smaller programmes at this level, and a noticeably higher proportion of part-time learners than in any other levels, as shown in figure 14 in Appendix One. From 2002-2009, an annual mean of 61% of level 1-3 enrolments were part-time. In comparison, over this same period the annual average percentage of level 4 learners that studied part-time was 53%, 50% at levels 5-7, and 27% at Bachelors-level. At all levels other than 5-7, however, recent years have seen a decline in the percentage of part-time learners.

There is a clear difference in study type apparent between levels 1&2 and level 3. Levels 1&2 are dominated by part-time learners, with only approximately 30% of learners being full-time each year from 2003 to 2009. In contrast, level 3 enrolments are much more evenly-split, with an annual mean of 48% of learners studying part-time over that period.

The division between part-time and full-time learners also varies noticeably between ethnic groups, as shown in figure 3 below. From 2005 onwards, learners of European ethnicity have had the largest proportion of part-time enrolments, while Asian domestic learners have undergone a sharp and relatively consistent decline in the proportion of part-time learners – to the extent that in 2009 only 37% of learners from this ethnic group were part-time. Pacific learners, conversely, have consistently fluctuated around the 50% mark over the period, albeit with a sharp decline in 2009.

**Figure 6: Percentage of Level 1-3 domestic learners that are part-time by ethnicity, 2003-2009**



<sup>6</sup> An Equivalent Full-Time Student (EFTS) is a standardised measure of the amount of study in which a given student is engaged, used for many purposes including funding. One EFTS is equivalent to an average full-time degree level course load, or 120 credits, so, for example, a part-time student enrolled in courses to the value of 60 credits would count as 0.5 of an EFTS.

## Field of Study

Enrolments in the priority learner group have traditionally been concentrated in three areas, with enrolments since 2005 being concentrated in the broad *Society and Culture* and *Management and Commerce* NZSCED fields.<sup>7</sup> *Society and Culture* programmes at this level are strongly concentrated in the 'Studies in Human Society' and 'language and literature' narrow fields, together accounting for 82% of all EFTS in this field in 2009, while *Management and Commerce* enrolments are dominated by 'Office Studies' programmes (60% of all EFTS in the field in 2009, with the next-largest area being 'Tourism' with 15% and 'Business and Management' with 14%).

Prior to 2005, *Mixed Field Programmes* were the largest area of study,<sup>8</sup> but since then there has been a continual and dramatic decline. This was driven primarily by an ongoing massive decrease in 'Employment Skills' and 'Social Skills' programmes.<sup>9</sup> Table 4 overleaf shows the distribution of EFTS (not learners) at levels 1-3 by NZSCED Broad Field from 2003-2009, as well as the total number of EFTS enrolled in that year.

## 'Vocational' Programmes

Table 4 also includes an indication of the spread of EFTS between vocational and generic fields. These figures should be taken as only an approximation, however, due to the absence of a specific 'vocational' marker for programmes, and difficulties using field of study as a proxy for such a marker.

These difficulties are based on a number of points. Firstly, the simple notion that a vocational qualification is one that is intended to lead to a career associated with those skills is superficially appealing, but some may argue that very few fields of study are not associated with a career in some way. These arguments may vary in strength depending on the field of study and career concerned, but their existence is worth noting. Secondly, there exist programmes leading to skills that are linked strongly to employment settings and yet are 'generic' in that they are not tied to a specific occupation – the occupational counterpart of what the Industry Training Federation has termed 'Cross-sectoral vocational education and training' with regard to matching study and industries:

There is a further area of tertiary education and training that is clearly vocational. It is intended to provide skills for individuals to gain work and be productive in work, but ... relates to skills, knowledge and capabilities that cross a range of sectors or industries (ITF 2009, p11)

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<sup>7</sup> The New Zealand Standard Classification of Education (NZSCED) is the formal subject taxonomy and coding system used to identify and classify tertiary programmes. It consists of a hierarchy with three 'layers' – *Broad* fields such as *Architecture and Building*, which include *Narrow* fields such as 'Building', which include *Specific* fields such as 'Carpentry and Joinery'.

<sup>8</sup> *Mixed Field Programmes* (NZSCED 12) consist of programmes that draw on multiple subject areas, many of which deal with basic skills. The three main fields within this broad area are 'General Education Programmes', which cover learning skills and school-level education; 'Social Skills Programmes', which provide the basic skills necessary for independent living in modern New Zealand; and 'Employment Skills Programmes', which develop the skills necessary to look for and obtain employment.

<sup>9</sup> This decrease may be due to a significant decline in a group of similar qualifications designed to provide basic skills: *Mauri Ora*, *Kiwi Ora*, *Mahi Ora* and *Life skills* programmes. In 2003, enrolments in these programmes made up 32% of all level 1-3 learners. By 2008 and 2009, however, this had fallen to 7%.

**Table 5: Distribution of Level 1-3 Certificate EFTS by NZSCED Broad Field, 2003-2009**

| NZSCED Broad Field                                    | 2003   | 2004   | 2005   | 2006   | 2007   | 2008   | 2009   |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Natural and Physical Sciences                         | 1.3%   | 1.0%   | 0.9%   | 0.9%   | 0.9%   | 1.0%   | 1.0%   |
| Information Technology                                | 4.5%   | 4.7%   | 3.8%   | 3.5%   | 3.1%   | 3.2%   | 3.2%   |
| Engineering and Related Technologies                  | 9.9%   | 9.8%   | 9.9%   | 11.4%  | 12.5%  | 12.3%  | 12.2%  |
| Architecture and Building                             | 2.1%   | 2.7%   | 2.5%   | 2.4%   | 2.3%   | 2.8%   | 2.8%   |
| Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies        | 8.4%   | 7.1%   | 8.1%   | 10.0%  | 8.9%   | 8.9%   | 8.7%   |
| Health  | 2.2%   | 2.0%   | 2.1%   | 2.7%   | 3.0%   | 3.5%   | 4.0%   |
| Education   | 1.7%   | 2.1%   | 1.6%   | 1.2%   | 1.1%   | 1.1%   | 0.9%   |
| Management and Commerce                               | 19.2%  | 18.9%  | 25.9%  | 24.5%  | 23.9%  | 24.9%  | 23.3%  |
| Society and Culture                                   | 14.1%  | 14.2%  | 14.4%  | 18.6%  | 23.6%  | 23.3%  | 24.1%  |
| Creative Arts   | 3.3%   | 3.1%   | 2.4%   | 2.7%   | 2.4%   | 2.8%   | 3.3%   |
| Food, Hospitality and Personal Services               | 7.3%   | 6.4%   | 6.0%   | 6.2%   | 6.3%   | 6.4%   | 7.1%   |
| Mixed Field Programmes                                | 26.0%  | 28.2%  | 22.3%  | 16.0%  | 12.1%  | 10.0%  | 9.3%   |
| Total EFTS  | 60,100 | 65,790 | 66,200 | 61,700 | 59,950 | 57,330 | 57,580 |
| % of EFTS in 'Specific Vocational' fields (see below) | 42%    | 40%    | 39%    | 42%    | 42%    | 44%    | 46%    |
| % of EFTS in 'Generic Vocational' areas (see below)   | 40%    | 37%    | 39%    | 34%    | 31%    | 30%    | 28%    |
| % of EFTS in 'Generic' areas (see below)              | 18%    | 23%    | 22%    | 24%    | 27%    | 26%    | 26%    |

Furthermore, the nature of programmes within fields can change as the level of study does. For example, a degree-level Information Technology (NZSCED 02) or Accountancy (NZSCED 0801) programme might focus on the skills required to work as a professional in these areas, such as a programmer or an accountant. At lower levels however, these programmes might be more generic in nature, focusing on effectively using a computer or providing the necessary accounting knowledge for a small business owner to maintain their own accounts. Conversely, it could be argued that the common increased emphasis on theory at higher qualification levels makes them less directly vocational than those at lower levels (which arguably focus on fundamental 'skills to do the job').

Notwithstanding those issues, Table 4 is based on fields of study being allocated to one of three categories: 'specific vocational' fields, which – at levels 1-3 – are likely to link closely to a specific career; 'generic vocational' fields, which at this level likely align with the ITF's definition of cross-sectoral vocational fields; and 'generic' fields, which at this level provide skills that are more

generally applicable and not focused specifically on employment or work settings. Appendix Two lists the relevant NZSCED codes included in each category.

On this basis, the proportion of EFTS in 'generic' areas is increasing (having risen consistently over the period, from 18% in 2003 to 26% in 2009). However, so too – after a dip from 2003 to 2005 – are those in 'specific vocational' programmes. This has been driven by a clear decline in the number of EFTS in 'generic vocational' programmes, from 40% in 2003 to 28% in 2009. The main driver for this has been a dramatic decrease in 'Employment Skills' EFTS (NZSCED 1205), which fell from 11,000 EFTS to 3000 over this period.

## Targeted Training and Academic Preparation

As noted earlier, the 'priority learners' group for this project primarily consists of learners at levels 1-3 of the NZQF. However, two other sets of learners have many similarities to this core group in terms of the purpose of their programmes. Specifically, these are learners who are participating in targeted training programme, and those who are participating in NQF level 4 bridging programmes that are designed to prepare learners for further study at degree level.

### Targeted Training Programmes

Targeted Training Programmes is a term used to refer to three specific Government schemes that are aimed at building fundamental work and life skills. The first of these – *Skill Enhancement* – has recently been cancelled, and therefore has not been considered in this report. The remaining two programmes are *Training Opportunities* and *Youth Training*. In-depth profiles of participants in both these schemes are available in Mahoney (2009a, 2010b), and this section summarises some data from both official datasets and Mahoney's work on these schemes.

*Training Opportunities* (TO) is a scheme intended to support training for low-qualified learners at risk of long-term unemployment. From 2010 onwards 40% of the funding for this programme has been transferred to and administered by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), with MSD focusing on short, employment-focused training and TEC funding being directed more toward literacy, language and numeracy programmes.<sup>10</sup> The TEC's portion has been renamed *Foundation-Focused Training Opportunities*, and MSD's portion is known as *Training For Work*. Note that this change occurred after the period described in this report. *Youth Training* (YT) has a similar aim to *Training Opportunities*, but is designed for learners under 18.

The number of TO participants has fallen dramatically since 2000. As shown in figure 4 overleaf, Māori and European numbers fell dramatically from 2000 to 2005, with Māori experiencing another sharp decrease in 2009. This has led to the 'gap' between Māori and European participation narrowing considerably in that year (with 39% identifying as Māori compared to 37% as European). The number of Pacific, Asian, and 'Other' ethnicity participants, on the other hand, has remained relatively stable from 2000 to 2009.

As with *Training Opportunities*, the number of *Youth Training* placements has undergone a consistent decrease over the decade, falling by 32% from 15,595 in 2000 to 10,580 in 2009. As

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<sup>10</sup> See <http://www.tec.govt.nz/Funding/Fund-finder/Foundation-Focused-Training-Opportunities/>



shown in figure 8 below, the *Youth Training* scheme also has a similar ethnic profile over time as *Training Opportunities*, with Māori and European learners dominating participation but numbers from both ethnic groups having fallen over the period, while participation by Pacific, Asian, and 'Other' ethnic groups remained steady. There is a small increase in participation numbers by Pacific learners at the end of this period, but in the absence of further work it is unclear whether this represents an increase in participation *rates* of Pacific learners.

Figure 7: Learners in Training Opportunities programmes by ethnicity, 2000-2009

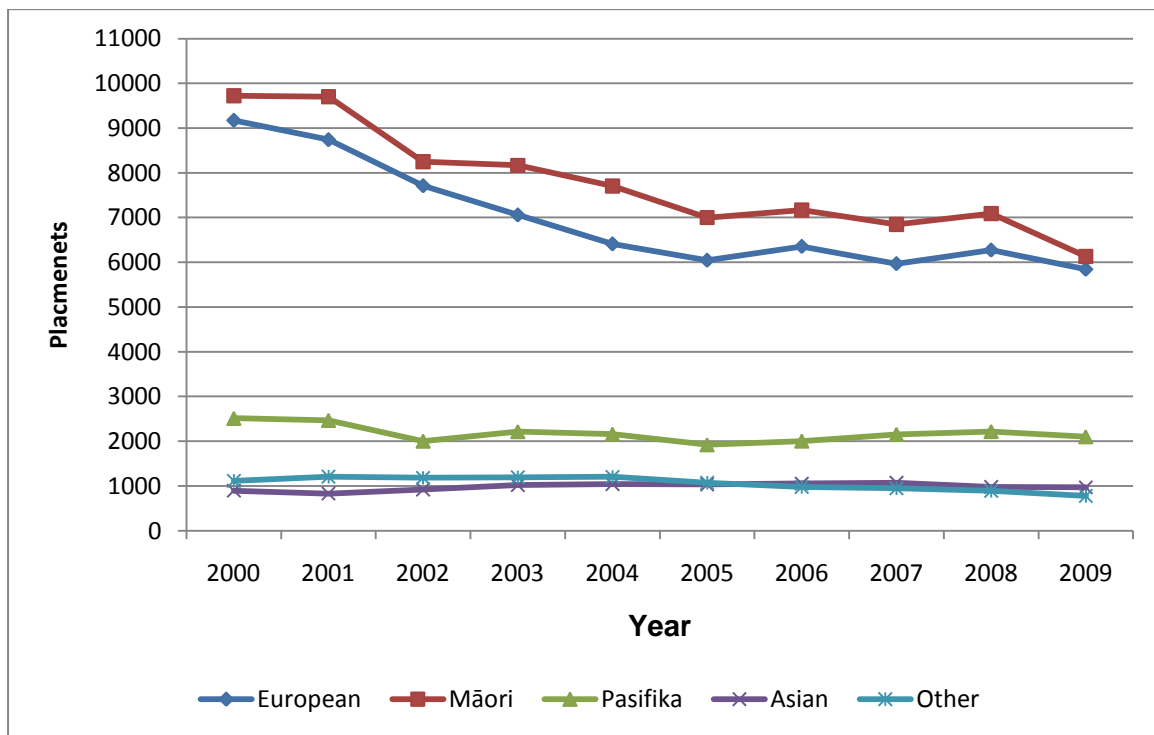
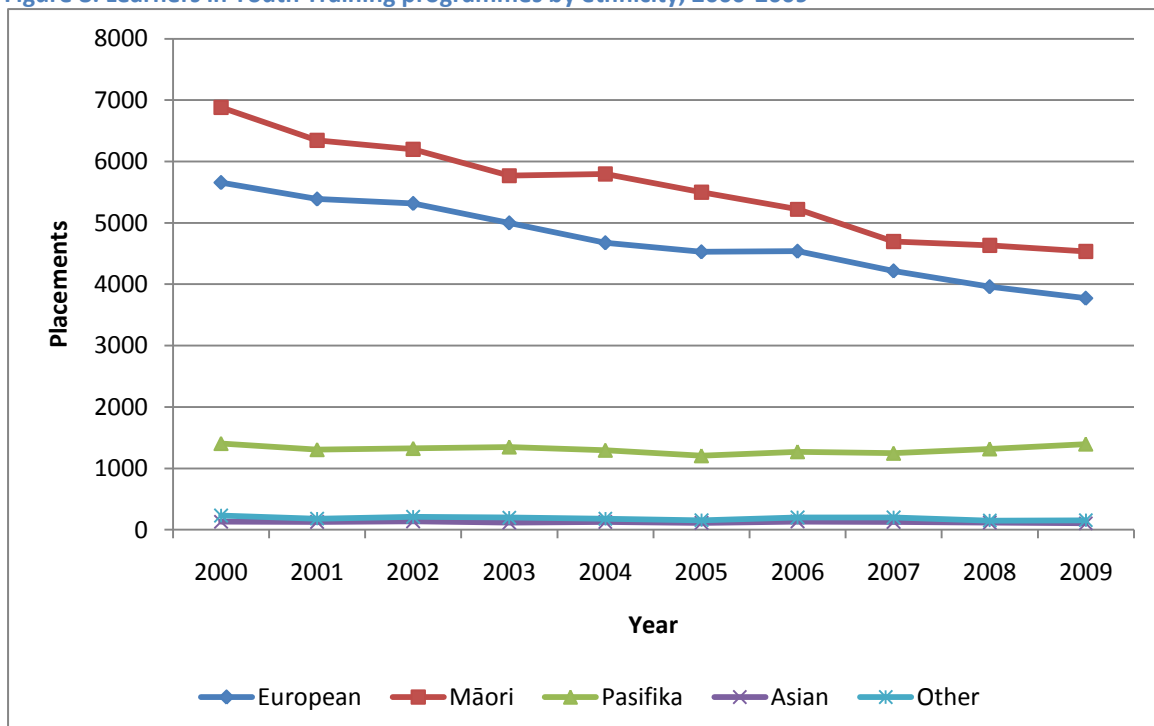


Figure 8: Learners in Youth Training programmes by ethnicity, 2000-2009



Participants in *Training Opportunities* have a considerably younger age-profile than level 1-3 learners. In 2009, 49% of TO learners were under 25, 26% aged 25-39, and 25% aged 40+. In that same year, 33% of level 1-3 learners were under 25, 29% aged 25-39, and 38% aged 40+. However, the age profile of this scheme has increased over time; while the percentage aged under 25 remained relatively stable between 1999 and 2007, the percentage aged 25-39 steadily decreased (from 38% in 1999) and the percentage aged 40+ increased (from 20% in 1999). *Youth Training* obviously has an even younger profile, with less than 10% of participants in 2009 aged 18 or over.

Both *Training Opportunities* and *Youth Training* are overwhelmingly based in PTEs, with more than 90% of placements in both schemes being in this sub-sector every year. According to Mahoney (2009a; 2010b), within this broad category, the clear majority of providers are actual Private Training Establishments (75% and 76% of TO and *Youth Training* providers respectively in 2007), with Charitable Trusts being the only other significant provider type (13% and 14% respectively).<sup>11</sup>

The Ministry of Education estimates that the majority of *Training Opportunities* placements occur in NZSCED Broad fields *Society and Culture* (35% in 2007) and *Food, Hospitality, and Personal Services* (23%) (Mahoney 2009a).<sup>12</sup> *Mixed Field Programmes, Management and Commerce, and Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies* were originally also popular areas of enrolment (15%, 10%, and 9% respectively of placements in 1999), but these all declined over the decade (to 7%, 8%, and 7% respectively in 2007).

*Youth Training* placements show a more diverse range of fields, but interestingly in comparison to *Training Opportunities*, no placements have been undertaken in the *Food, Hospitality, and Personal Services* Broad field (Mahoney 2010b). As with *Training Opportunities*, *Society and Culture* is a very popular field for placements (35% in 2008), but *Mixed Field Programmes* – while declining in popularity over time – are also common (23% of placements in 2008).

## Bridging Programmes

Official data does not include a specific designation for bridging programmes. For this profile, we have therefore looked at Level 4 programmes with the NZSCED code 120105: *Learning Skills Programmes*. These are programmes “... that prepare individuals in the development of skills, such as research and analysis skills, for study projects” (Ministry of Education n.d.). It should be noted that this may omit some programmes that are classified within different NZSCED categories.

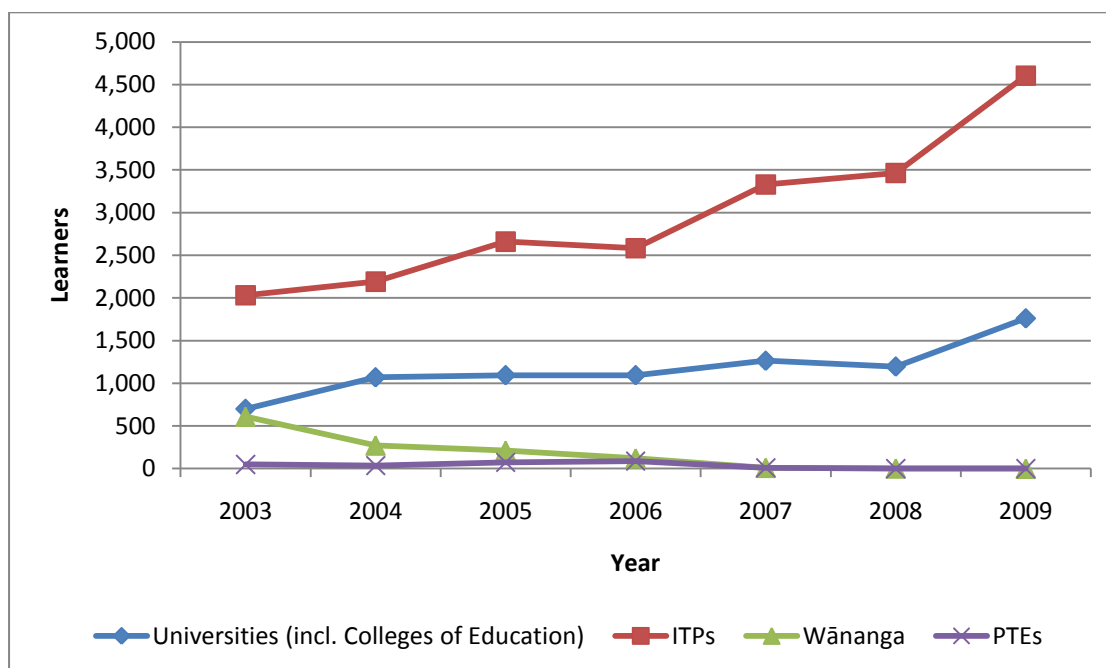
As shown in Figure 9, participation in such programmes has grown more or less steadily over the previous decade, from 3388 learners in 2003, to 6354 in 2009. This growth has been concentrated in universities and ITPs, while wānanga and PTEs have exited these programmes over that period. In 2009, 72% of such enrolments were in ITPs, while 28% were in universities. With many universities signalling their intent to move out of these academic preparation programmes, data from 2010 and later will likely show a dramatic fall-off in university learner numbers, leaving ITPs as the only providers in this area.

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<sup>11</sup> Note that many ‘non-PTE’ providers, possibly including charitable trusts, are also registered PTEs.

<sup>12</sup> As targeted training programmes involve a collection of standards rather than a formal qualification, they are not associated with NZSCED codes. Mahoney (2009a) constructed these associations for this analysis.

Figure 9: Domestic learners in Level 4 Learning Skills Programmes (NZSCED 120105) by sector, 2003-2009



Tables 7 and 8 in Appendix One describe participation in these programmes by ethnicity and age. Over the surveyed period, participation by Pacific and Māori learners has decreased, while participation by European learners has generally increased over the period. In terms of age, the proportion aged 25 or older has steadily decreased over the period (from 44% in 2003 to 31% in 2009), while the proportion aged under 20 has consistently increased (from 40% to 51% over the same period).

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Ministry of Education. (n.d.). *NZSCED Detailed Fields of Study*. Retrieved November 9, 2010, from [http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/technical\\_info/code\\_sets/new\\_zealand\\_standard\\_classification\\_of\\_education\\_nzsced](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/technical_info/code_sets/new_zealand_standard_classification_of_education_nzsced)

\_\_\_ (n.d.). *Participation Rates in Tertiary Education*. Retrieved March 11, 2011, from [http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/technical\\_info/indicator\\_definition/student\\_participation/schooling/3953](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/technical_info/indicator_definition/student_participation/schooling/3953)

## Appendix One: Supplementary Graphs and Tables

Figure 10: Age-standardised Tertiary Participation Rates of ethnic groups by level, 2002-2009

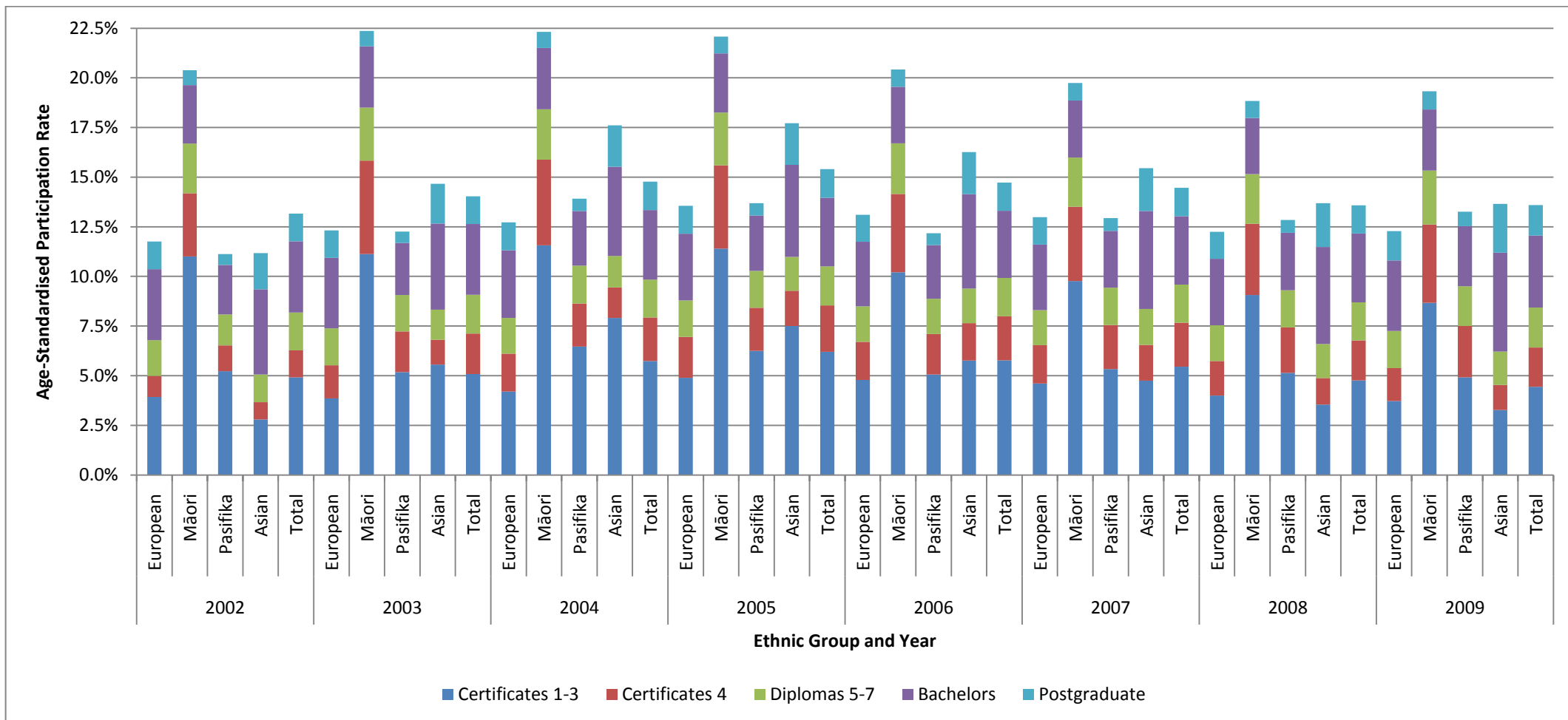


Figure 11: Domestic Participants in Level 1-3 Certificates by age-group (numbers of learners) , 2002-2009

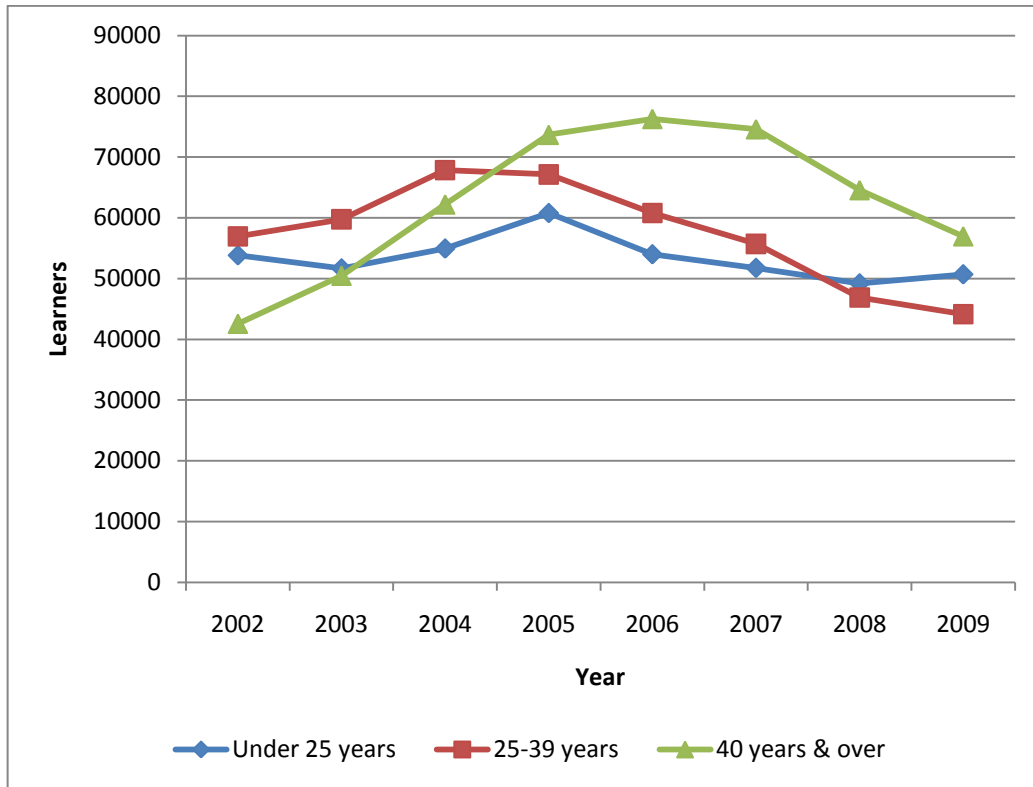


Figure 12: Domestic participants in level 1-3 Certificates by age-group (percentage of learners); 2002-2009

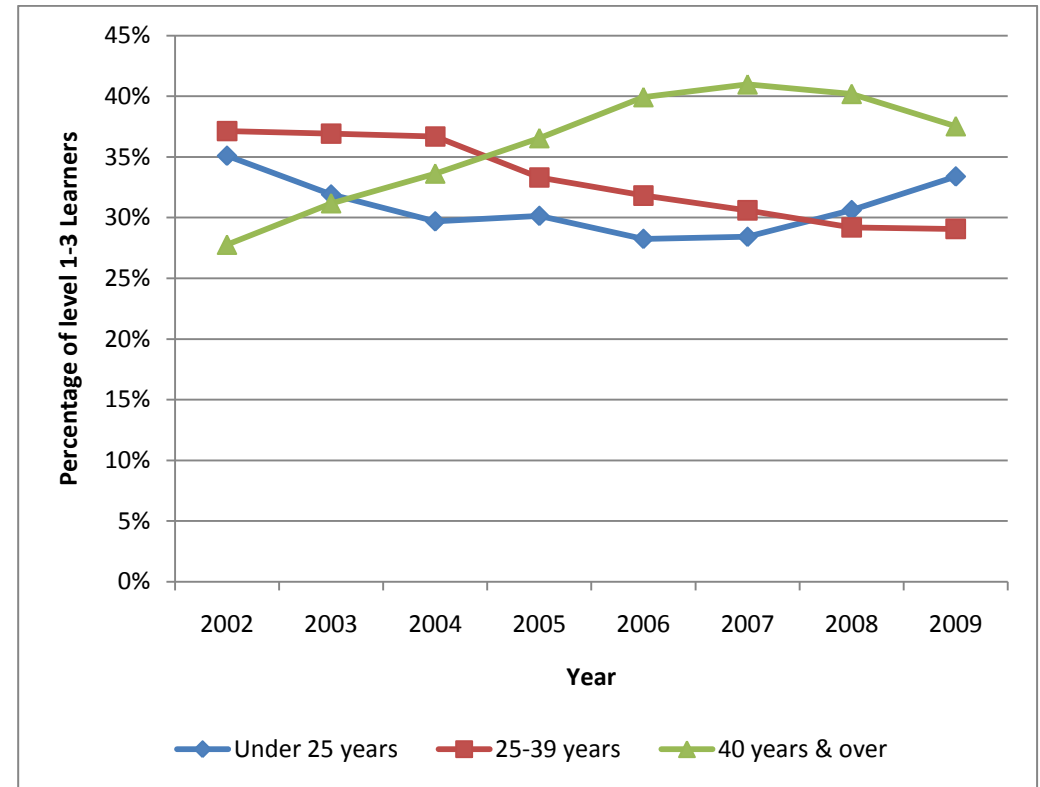


Figure 13: Percentage of level 1-3 domestic learners studying at at Levels 1 and 2 by ethnicity, 2003-2009

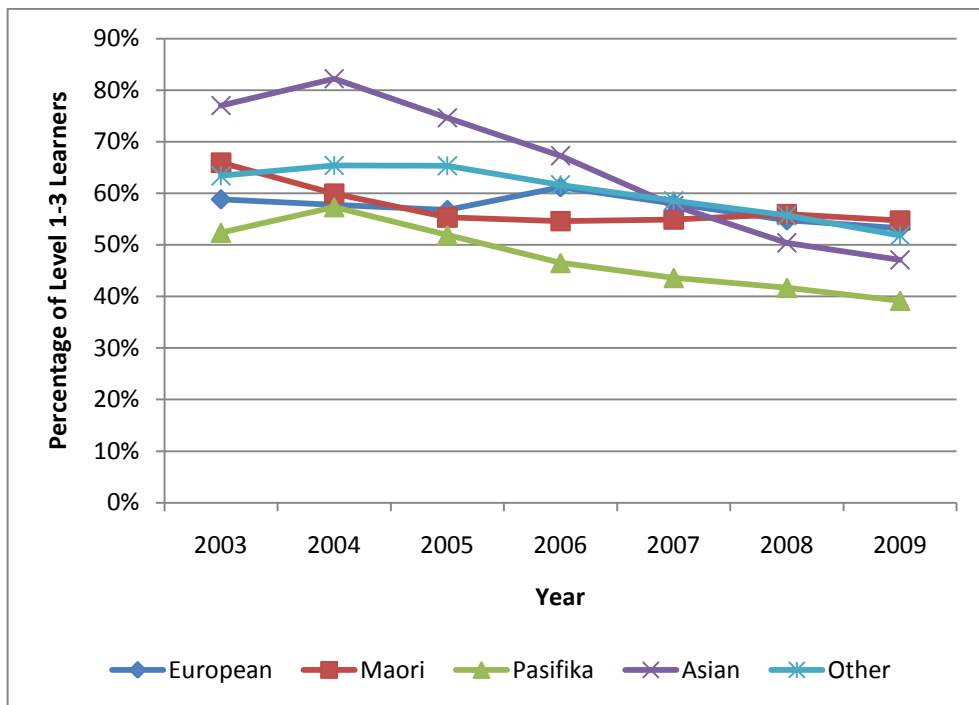


Figure 14: Percentage of domestic learners that are part-time by qualification level, 2002-2009

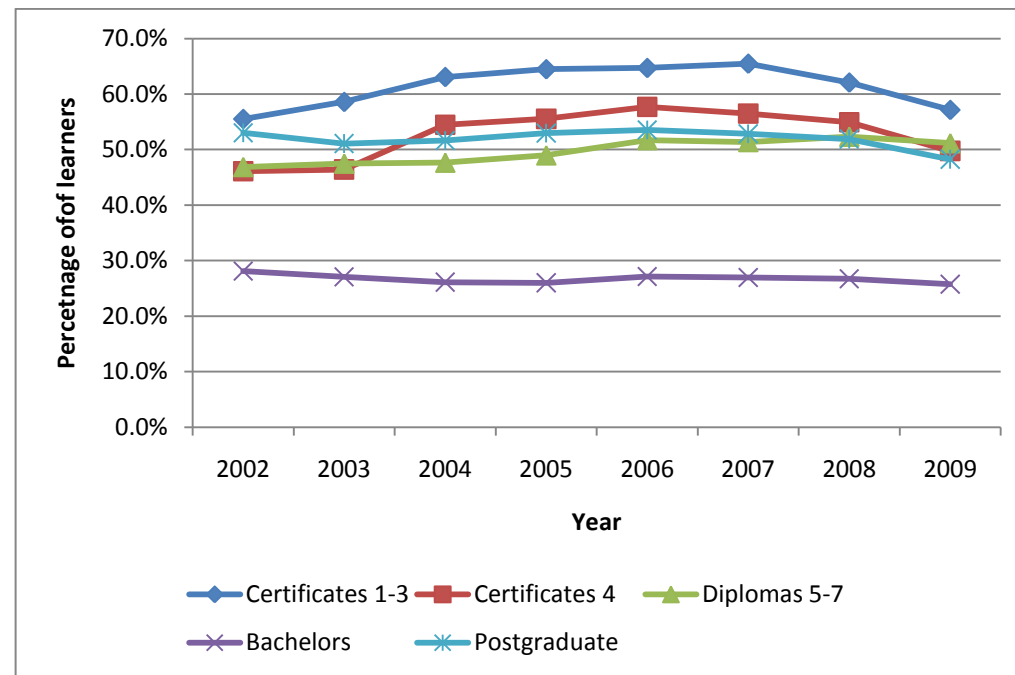


Table 6: Number of level 1-2 domestic learners by ethnicity, 2003-2009<sup>13</sup>

| Ethnicity | 2003   | 2004    | 2005    | 2006    | 2007    | 2008   | 2009   |
|-----------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| European  | 46,177 | 53,029  | 63,939  | 68,241  | 63,009  | 52,154 | 47,855 |
| Māori     | 33,613 | 33,248  | 30,425  | 27,089  | 26,183  | 25,055 | 24,087 |
| Pasifika  | 5,762  | 8,095   | 7,427   | 5,738   | 5,707   | 5,412  | 5,193  |
| Asian     | 14,029 | 22,527  | 20,516  | 15,131  | 11,150  | 7,753  | 7,121  |
| Other     | 3,490  | 4,340   | 4,967   | 4,477   | 3,995   | 2,844  | 2,423  |
| Total     | 94,760 | 112,776 | 119,689 | 113,966 | 102,690 | 86,283 | 79,494 |

<sup>13</sup> Note that learner ethnicity has not been prioritised. Numbers for individual ethnic groups therefore do not sum to the total number of learners.

Table 7: Domestic learners in Level 4 Learning Skills Programmes (NZSCED 120105) by ethnicity, 2003-2009<sup>13</sup>

| Age Group | 2003  |     | 2004  |     | 2005  |     | 2006  |     | 2007  |     | 2008  |     | 2009  |     |
|-----------|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|
|           | N     | %   | N     | %   | N     | %   | N     | %   | N     | %   | N     | %   | N     | %   |
| European  | 1,414 | 42% | 1,654 | 46% | 1,993 | 50% | 2,007 | 52% | 2,504 | 54% | 2,394 | 51% | 3,482 | 55% |
| Māori     | 1,247 | 37% | 1,014 | 28% | 946   | 23% | 862   | 22% | 1,129 | 24% | 1,221 | 26% | 1,630 | 26% |
| Pasifika  | 563   | 17% | 614   | 17% | 667   | 17% | 611   | 16% | 713   | 15% | 696   | 15% | 984   | 15% |
| Asian     | 345   | 10% | 419   | 12% | 521   | 13% | 500   | 13% | 430   | 9%  | 526   | 11% | 690   | 11% |
| Other     | 145   | 4%  | 168   | 5%  | 213   | 5%  | 252   | 6%  | 291   | 6%  | 291   | 6%  | 357   | 6%  |
| Total     | 3,388 | n/a | 3,567 | n/a | 4,026 | n/a | 3,877 | n/a | 4,609 | n/a | 4,659 | n/a | 6,354 | n/a |

Table 8: Domestic learners in Level 4 Learning Skills Programmes (NZSCED 120105) by age, 2003-2009

| Age Group       | 2003  |     | 2004  |     | 2005  |     | 2006  |     | 2007  |     | 2008  |     | 2009  |     |
|-----------------|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|
|                 | N     | %   | N     | %   | N     | %   | N     | %   | N     | %   | N     | %   | N     | %   |
| Under 18 years  | 353   | 10% | 373   | 10% | 496   | 12% | 489   | 13% | 582   | 13% | 629   | 14% | 825   | 13% |
| 18-19 years     | 1,000 | 30% | 1,159 | 32% | 1,255 | 31% | 1,309 | 34% | 1,612 | 35% | 1,516 | 33% | 2,386 | 38% |
| 20-24 years     | 546   | 16% | 575   | 16% | 635   | 16% | 618   | 16% | 674   | 15% | 761   | 16% | 1,177 | 19% |
| 25-39 years     | 913   | 27% | 883   | 25% | 952   | 24% | 832   | 21% | 957   | 21% | 977   | 21% | 1,169 | 18% |
| 40 years & over | 576   | 17% | 577   | 16% | 688   | 17% | 629   | 16% | 784   | 17% | 776   | 17% | 797   | 13% |
| Total           | 3,388 | n/a | 3,567 | n/a | 4,026 | n/a | 3,877 | n/a | 4,609 | n/a | 4,659 | n/a | 6,354 | n/a |



## Appendix Two: Constructing 'Vocational' Education

This Appendix describes the allocation of 'Broad' (2-digit) and 'Narrow' (4-digit) NZ Standard Classification of Education (NZSCED) study fields between 'specific vocational', 'generic vocational', and 'generic' categories. These have been used in the construction of categories for table 4 in the main body of this report.

It should be emphasised that this division has been constructed solely for the purposes of this report, as a general indicator of the amount of vocationally-focused level 1-3 study being undertaken. It does not represent the official view of Ako Aotearoa, nor any of the other organisations or individuals involved in this work, in any context other than in this report.

### **Specific Vocational Fields**

Broad fields (NZSCED Code): Engineering and Related Technologies (03); Architecture and building (04); Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies (05); Health (06); Education (07); Creative Arts (10); Food, Hospitality, and Personal Services (11).

Narrow Fields (NZSCED Code): Tourism (0807); Human Welfare Studies and Services (0905); Law (0909); Justice and Law Enforcement (0911); Librarianship, Information Management and Curatorial Studies (0913); Sport and Recreation (0921).

### **Generic Vocational Fields**

Broad fields (NZSCED Code): Information Technology (02).

Narrow Fields (NZSCED Code): Accountancy (0801); Business and Management (0803); Sales and Marketing (0805); Office Studies (0809); Banking and Related Fields (0811); Other Management and Commerce (0899); Employment Skills Programmes (1205).

### **Generic Fields**

Broad Fields (NZSCED Code): Natural and Physical Sciences (01).

Narrow Fields (NZSCED Code): Political Science and Policy Studies (0901); Studies in Human Society (0903); Behavioural Science (0907); Language and Literature (0915); Philosophy and Religious Studies (0917); Economics and Econometrics (0919); Other Society and Culture (0999); General Education Programmes (1201); Social Skills Programmes (1203); Other Mixed Field Programmes (1299).

